DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 097 409 UD 014 599

AUTHOR	Guerra, Roberto S.; And Others
TITLE	Black Youth and Occupational Education in Texas.
INSTITUTION	Houston Univ., Tex. Center for Human Resources.
SPONS AGENCY	Texas Education Agency, Austin. Div. of Occupational Research and Development.
PUB DATE	Jun 74
NOTE	189p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$9.00 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Community Attitudes; Dropout Characteristics; Employer Attitudes; Employment Opportunities; High School Students; *Negro Students; *Occupational Guidance; Parent Attitudes; School Personnel; State Government; State Programs; *State Surveys; Student Attitudes; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Texas

ABSTRACT

This report focuses on the responses given by 1,531 black high school students interviewed in 11 school districts throughout the State of Texas. It also reports on interviews conducted with a sample of black graduates, dropouts, and parents, school personnel, community people, and employers. Part 1 includes background material. The findings of a previous study in occupational education which resulted in these reports are briefly analyzed. The framework of the study is described in detail: project goals and objectives, general methodology, description of target populations, and the organization and phasing utilized in its execution. Part 2 contains an analysis of the characteristics, attitudes, aspirations, and problems of the black high school students interviewed in 23 high schools located in key metropolitan areas as well as a number of communities in East Texas. In addition, it summarizes the results of two other questionnaires and interviews administered to a limited number of black parents whose children are enrolled in vocational programs and a small sample of black students who have left school either by dropping out or through graduation. Part 3 incorporates other project findings gathered through interviewing school personnel, community people, and employers. Part 4 is a summary of the findings and a discussion of their implications. (Author/JM)

ED 097409

BLACK YOUTH AND OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION IN TEXAS

Submitted to

The Division of Occupational Research and Development
of the
Texas Education Agency
Under Contracts 31751 - 42301176

by

Roberto S. Guerra and Sam Schulman
Assisted by
Robert L. Armstrong

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

UD 014 599

Center for Human Resources
College of Business Administration
University of Houston
June 1974

RECEIVED
OCT 14 1974
NMSU
E.R.I.C.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to express our grateful appreciation to the many students, ex-students, parents, employers, and other individuals who were involved in this research effort. A special note of thanks goes out to teachers, counselors, vocational education directors, and other school administrators who so graciously received project staff in each of the school districts surveyed. Without their assistance and cooperation, this project could not have been possible.

Within the Center for Human Resources we wish to recognize the guidance and advice provided by Dr. J. Earl Williams and Dr. Joseph E. Champagne, the programming expertise of Jo Ann Verdin, the editing talents of Ms. Jane Lerner who also constantly provided ideas and suggestions which facilitated the production of this publication, and the tireless work of Ms. Ethel Dumbauld and her clerical staff--Billye Thomas, James Prentice, and Shirley Robbins.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the Texas Education Agency, Division of Occupational Research and Development for funding this project. Mr. Ray Barber and Mr. Oscar Millican, as usual, were always willing to extend a helping hand.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last three years, the University of Houston, Center for Human Resources has conducted research into various aspects of occupational education in Texas high schools. This report represents part of a continuing effort by the Texas Education Agency, Division of Occupational Research and Development to profile and describe the students involved in secondary education programs and more importantly, to document the kind and quality of occupational training offered to them. This evaluation and documentation can best be accomplished through systematic research studies which provide educational practitioners and policy makers with current updated information concerning occupational education.

Black Youth and Occupational Education in Texas is the first of five reports published by the Center for Human Resources, University of Houston, under a grant provided by the Division of Occupational Research and Development of the Texas Education Agency entitled "Vocational Education in Texas High Schools: An Ethnic Comparison." Other project findings are reported upon separately in three additional reports: Occupational Education in Texas: An Ethnic Comparison, Manpower and Vocational Education in Texas, and A Demographic Profile of Texas and Selected Cities. A fifth publication, Occupational Education in Texas: Summary and Conclusions synthesizes the four project reports and discusses the implications of the findings.

Black Youth and Occupational Education in Texas focuses on the responses given by 1,531 Black high school students interviewed in 11 school districts throughout the State of Texas. It also reports on interviews conducted with

a sample of Black graduates, dropouts, and parents, school personnel, community people and employers. The report is divided into four parts.

Part I includes background material. The findings of a previous study in occupational education which resulted in these reports are briefly analyzed. The framework of the study is described in detail: project goals and objectives, general methodology, description of target populations, and the organization and phasing utilized in its execution.

Part II contains the bulk of this report--an analysis of the characteristics, attitudes, aspirations, and problems of the Black high school students interviewed in 23 high schools located in key metropolitan areas as well as a number of communities in East Texas. In addition, it summarizes the results of two other questionnaires and interviews administered to a limited number of Black parents whose children are enrolled in vocational programs and a small sample of Black students who have left school either by dropping out or through graduation.

Part III incorporates other project findings gathered through interviewing school personnel, community people, and employers. These were small purposive samples which allowed for a comprehensive view of vocational education and its relationship to young people, especially Black youth.

Part IV is a summary of the findings and a discussion of the implications which this study has for the occupational and career training of Black youth throughout the State of Texas.

It is hoped that these research efforts will reach those persons who are charged with providing quality education to the young people, and in the process help to alleviate a few of the many problems facing Black youth in Texas.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS. iii

INTRODUCTION. v

PART I - PROJECT GOALS, METHODOLOGY, AND ORGANIZATION 1

Chapter 1 Project Goals, Methodology, and Organization 1

Background of the Study. 1
Project Goals and Objective. 3
General Methodology and Description of Instruments 5
Project Phasing. 8
Project Organization 9

PART II - BLACK YOUTHS AND THEIR PARENTS:
VIEWS TOWARD OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION 11

Chapter 2 A Black Student Profile. 12

A Note on Methodology. 13
Profile of Black Students. 15
After High School, Then What 17
Most Preferred Post-High School Alternatives 17
Degree of Preference for Post-Secondary Alternative. 20
Type of Job Desired. 23
Expected Salary and Location of Job. 25
Preferences in Post-High School Training
and Education. 27
General Preferences in Education 31
Apprenticeship Programs and Other Vocational Programs. 32
Marriage and Working Women 33
Ideal and Expected Future Jobs 34
Reasons for Wanting Ideal Future Jobs. 36
Expected Lifetime Jobs 38
School, Work, and Life 39
Parents. 43
Jobs and Careers 44
School, Work and After School Activities 48
Possible Factors in Migration. 52
Who Gets the Jobs. 54
Things Looked Forward To 56
Special Items for VE Students. 58
Summary. 63

PAGE

Chapter 3 Black Graduates and Dropouts 65

Graduate, Dropout, and Parent Profile. 66
Post-High School Experiences 68
Ideal and Expected Jobs. 72
Potential Migration. 73
Future Goals 76
Attitudes Toward Vocational Education. 77
Job Problems 80
Attitude Questions Toward School, Home, Family and Work. 83
Parents. 84
Questions Relating to School Dropouts. 85
Summary. 87

Chapter 4 Parents and Schools. 89

Parent Profile 89
Attitude Toward School and School Activities 91
Future Plans 98
Summary. 99

PART III - THE VIEWS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL, COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES AND EMPLOYERS TOWARD VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES 101

Chapter 5 The Views of School Personnel. 102

Profile of School Respondents. 102
Attitudes Toward Vocational Education. 103
Career Education 106
Adequacy of Vocational Programs. 108
Vocational Education and Blacks. 111
Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education 114
Job Problems Encountered by Young People 116
Additional Job Related Problems Faced by Black Youth 119
Importance of Career and Job Related Topics. 120
Availability of Placement and Counseling Services in the High Schools. 122
Recent Trends in Students' Post-High School Plans. 123
Recommendations for Improving Schools and Vocational Programs. 125
Role of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) 127
Summary. 121

PAGE

Chapter 6 Community Interviews. 129

Profile of Selected Community Informants. 129
Community Attitudes Toward the Concept and Adequacy of Secondary School Programs 130
Career Education. 132
Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education. 133
Black Youth and Vocational Education. 134
Advantages of VE Programs 134
Disadvantages of VE 135
Job Problems Encountered by Young People. 136
Special Job Problems Encountered by Blacks. 138
Improving Educational/Training Opportunities for Blacks. 139
Community Involvement 140
Summary 141

Chapter 7 Employers and Young People. 143

Employer Profile. 143
Employer Attitude Toward Vocational Education 145
Adequacy of Vocational Education: The Employer's View 147
Employers, Young People, and Vocational Students. 149
Skills Acquisition and Job Recruitment. 150
School-Employer Contacts. 152
Job Problems Encountered by Young People. 153
What Should Schools Do To Better Prepare Youth For Employment? 157
Summary 161

PART IV - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. 163

Chapter 8 Summary and Conclusions 163

Students. 163
Black Graduates and Dropouts. 166
A Note on Black Parents 167
Community, School, and Employer Input 168
A Note on Counseling and Guidance 173

APPENDIX A

Name of School Districts and High Schools Surveyed. 179

APPENDIX B

Description of Group Guidance Program 181

PART I

CHAPTER 1

PROJECT GOALS, METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

Background of the Study

A recent study by the Center for Human Resources, University of Houston--Mexican American Youth and Vocational Education in Texas (1973)--included, among other things, a data base on Mexican American high school students throughout the State of Texas. More than 2,100 respondents were interviewed--vocational and non-vocational students, high school graduates, dropouts, parents, employers, school personnel, and community informants. The respondents included nearly 1,700 high school students, with over 1,000 being vocational education students. Ten cities and school districts in Texas, mostly in the border regions and in the larger urban areas, were part of that project. The findings of the Mexican American study indicated that there were many changes taking place, not only in vocational education but in all facets of the educational environment. It also highlighted the problems of vocational education and particularly those facing Mexican American students. For instance, students interviewed consistently said that "getting a steady job" was their first post-high school preference. However, when vocational education enrollment patterns were compared to labor market demands, it was found that not only were Mexican American students over-represented in vocational education programs but that the programs in which they were enrolled did not coincide with available jobs in the labor market. These and other findings in the Mexican American study raised questions about other groups in the State.

Do Black and Anglo American high school students exhibit similar patterns? Do these students have similar aspirations or are there differences among the various ethnic subgroups? If so, what are these differences and what implications do they have for educational policy makers in Texas?

Although the study focused on the problems, needs, and aspirations of Mexican American youth, its findings and recommendations had wide ramifications in many areas of the educational process: occupational training and placement, career education, counseling and guidance, teacher and counselor training, organization and planning--including manpower analysis and adequate record keeping, curriculum development, the relationship of industry to education, and the need to clear up confusion regarding the role of vocational education both within the school setting and in the community at large. In some instances, it was found that vocational education still evoked a negative image. This seemed to be especially pronounced among upper and middle income parents and in certain segments of minority communities. Despite the realities of present day occupational needs there still seemed to be some resistance to vocational education at the high school level.

Thus, it was clear that the Mexican American study was but an initial step in attempting to ascertain the relationship between vocational education and minority groups in Texas. Consequently, the Division of Occupational Research and Development of the Texas Education Agency commissioned the Center for Human Resources, University of Houston, to continue and expand its research efforts in the area of occupational education for all students in the State.

In organizing and executing the present study, "Vocational Education in Texas High Schools: An Ethnic Comparison," it was decided to follow basically the same format as in the previous study. However, certain necessary changes had to be implemented. For instance, student questionnaires were condensed

and modified for use with students of all ethnic groups. Other instruments for parents, community people, and the like also were restructured. Geographical areas containing a large Black or tri-ethnic population were selected for this study. In all, eleven communities were identified as target areas. All cities selected represented either East Texas locales and/or major urban areas. They are Marshall, Tyler, Port Arthur, Beaumont, Galveston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Waco, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston. The focus of the study again was on the in-school vocational education student although a smaller sample of non-vocational students were interviewed for comparative purposes.

Project Goals and Objectives

The primary goals and objectives of this study relate to a Black vocational education study similar to the Mexican American study. Other objectives included a tri-ethnic analysis, a vocational education composition and enrollment analysis, and a thorough demographic analysis. The goals and objectives of the present study included:

A Black Profile - A major goal of this study was to document and describe the educational and training experiences of Black high school students and a limited number of graduates and dropouts in selected regions of the State of Texas. Specifically, some of the objectives were to:

Profile the Black youth who are in occupational education in Texas, both in terms of preparation for and participation in occupational education.

Document the experiences of Black youth who have been enrolled in occupational education as well as those who have not participated in such programs.

Profile the type, level, and quality of occupational education available to or made use of by Black youth in the selected regions.

Document the success and results of occupational education participation by Black youth in terms of labor market participation after training, job levels, and potential career mobility, employment/unemployment/underemployment and earnings.

Evaluate the relevancy of training areas in terms of employment opportunities in which Blacks are generally placed.

Evaluate the ancillary training services such as counseling, job placement, etc., available to or made use of by Black youth.

Assess the relationship between vocational education and union apprenticeship programs.

Profile the attitudes of school personnel at all levels toward Black youth in occupational and career education.

Make recommendations to the Texas Education Agency and selected school districts relative to program development and continuation based upon program relatedness and efficiency.

Document special programs or creative approaches that have been implemented by local school districts to assist Black youth in making the school-to-work transition.

Compare vocational enrollment patterns with manpower needs in the state and local areas, with special emphasis placed on Black youth.

A Tri-Ethnic Analysis - Another major objective of the study was to document the educational and training experiences of other youth in Texas by ethnicity in selected cities. These specific objectives include:

Profile a selected sample of Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans to obtain the same information as that for Blacks.

Compare selected findings of the Black project with the general findings of the Mexican American project.

Compare all three ethnic groups in at least three cities which have a substantial representation of each.

Special Services to Local School Districts - On the basis of information supplied by the previous project and that anticipated in the Black project, it was possible to provide orientation seminars at the local level. Also, instruments were developed for evaluative purposes. Specifically, some of these secondary objectives were to:

Feed back the findings of the Mexican American project to the local communities which were involved in the study. This was to be in the form of an in-service seminar for administrators, teachers, and guidance personnel.

Include as part of the in-service seminar an orientation to the state and local labor markets and their trends and to relate this information to vocational education trends in local school districts.

Modify to the extent necessary selected instruments to be used in the tri-ethnic study in order to provide local school districts with questionnaires which could be utilized with both in-school and out-of-school youth. These instruments could assist in the evaluation of local vocational programs and ascertain the experiences of graduates and dropouts.

During the course of the project, most of the goals and objectives were accomplished. Priority remained with the high school students as they were the focus of this study. The dissemination and anticipated utilization of project results will hopefully be carried on by educational researchers, educational practitioners at the state and local levels, and by legislative bodies and ad hoc committees whose realm of responsibility includes occupational education.

General Methodology and Description of Instruments

Each of the separate sections of this report contains a *Note on Methodology* which describes in detail the procedure utilized for that particular analysis. This section explains the general approach used to implement the project and the type of instruments constructed to solicit the desired data from the various subgroups.

There were eight samples from which primary data were to be collected: vocational students (Form A), non-vocational students (Form B), vocational education graduates (Form C), school dropouts (Form D), employers (Form E), parents (Form F), school personnel (Form G), and community people (Form H).

Most of the basic information in this project was gathered from in-school students, and therefore a brief, but highly structured instrument which could be administered in a group setting in the high schools was designed. This instrument, referred to as the A/B instrument, was a modification of the instrument used previously in the Mexican American study. It was pre-tested for readability, length, and format in the Galveston Independent School District. Student questionnaires were administered in large group settings during the Fall Semester 1974. The time required for completion was approximately one class period (45-55 minutes). It was the intent of this study to reach at least 200 students in each school district with approximately twice the number of students in vocational programs as in general academic programs. In the larger urban areas, more students were selected to allow for a tri-ethnic analysis. Over 2,500 students in 23 Texas high schools responded to this instrument;of this number over 1,500 were Blacks.* The items in Form A/B covered a variety of topics, and the questionnaire was well received by the majority of the students. It focused on student characteristics, attitudes toward school and vocational education, post-high school preferences, migration plans for job or training opportunities, and other school related activities. The questionnaire was largely closed-ended and arranged for printing on forms for ease in coding on optical scanning sheets. A few open-ended items gave students an opportunity to express themselves more openly.

The C/D Form was used with a limited sample of graduates and dropouts, and the majority of interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis by local personnel familiar with their communities contracted by the project. In addition to basic socioeconomic items, this questionnaire documented attitudes toward school, vocational education, and work, and allowed for a follow-up of education, training, and employment data of graduates and dropouts.

---

*See Appendix A for the names of school districts and high schools surveyed.

The employer questionnaire (E) was used mainly to assess employer attitude toward vocational education and students who had been through vocational education training in high school. This questionnaire relied more on semi-structured and open-ended items than the previous forms. It was administered mostly on a one-to-one basis.

Parents whose children were enrolled in vocational education programs in the high school were given a brief questionnaire (F) which solicited opinions concerning school and vocational education and inquired into their children's future plans. These interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis by specially trained local personnel familiar with their communities.

Forms G and H were administered to school and community persons respectively. These semi-structured instruments were administered by project staff, and they inquired into attitudes toward vocational education, career education, and other related topics. Both were brief questionnaires which were very instrumental in orienting project staff to many problem areas and needs encountered in the schools.

To complement the acquisition of primary data, two other analyses were undertaken: a complete demographic analysis detailing state and local population characteristics, trends, and projections and an analysis of the labor force as related to current vocational programs. These two studies were continuous, on-going activities during the life of the project and were conducted at project headquarters utilizing the latest census data counts and information provided by the Texas Education Agency.

In all, eleven school districts were selected for the study, and over 3,000 persons were contacted and administered questionnaires by project staff and others authorized to assist in this endeavor. Analysis of data

took place at the Center for Human Resources utilizing computer facilities at both the University of Houston and Rice University. All coding operations took place at the Center for Human Resources.

Project Phasing

The research project was divided into three major phases, each having a set of clearly identifiable objectives and deadlines. The three phases of this project are described below:

Phase I: Preparation and Feedback, March 1 to August 31, 1973

March 1 to April 30, 1973 - During this period project staff initiated preliminary revision of all instruments utilized in the Mexican American project. Priority was placed on the in-school instrument (A/B). It was the intent of the project staff to develop an instrument which all students could finish within 45 minutes (an average class period). The A/B instrument was developed by project staff and pre-tested in the Galveston Independent School District. Other instruments utilized by the project were also developed and finalized during this period. These included a high school graduate questionnaire (C), a questionnaire for school dropouts (D), and four other separate instruments used with employers (E), parents (F), school personnel (G), and community people (H).

May 1 to June 30, 1973 - During this period field work for selected target groups was initiated--employers, school personnel, and community informants. Initial contacts with school districts were also made at this time in order to establish schedules for workshops and seminars concerning feedback on Mexican American Project (local findings) and in-service training for vocational education personnel and other interested parties. Also, initial contacts were made in those cities which were to be surveyed in the Fall Semester, 1973. All questionnaires and codebooks to be used in the Fall survey were finalized. In addition, initial collection of demographic and manpower data was initiated.

July 1 to August 31, 1973 - Data contained in the Mexican American project were analyzed and packets prepared for each school district that participated in the survey. Student responses and manpower information was stressed in these packets. A total of five workshops were conducted throughout South and West Texas.* Interviewing of target population other than in-school students was continued during this period. Progress Report I submitted to funding agency.

*Workshops were held in El Paso, Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Laredo (2) and Harlingen. The Harlingen workshop, held on the Texas State Technical Institute Campus, included participants from throughout the Rio Grande Valley area.

Phase II: Field Phase, September 1, 1973 to January 31, 1974.

September 1-30, 1973 - Survey schedules in selected cities were finalized. Project staff was oriented and trained for field phase and training materials and procedures for use with field personnel in target communities were developed.

October 1 to December 31, 1973 - This period saw the initiation of the field work in the schools to be surveyed. Emphasis was placed on completing all in-school interviewing during this phase. All other target groups--school personnel, employers, parents, community people, graduates, and dropouts were interviewed during this period. Project staff recruited and trained local personnel in most areas to conduct out-of-school interviewing during this period. Also, coding of all in-school questionnaires was begun as soon as they were received from the field.

January 1-31, 1974 - This month was devoted to completion of the field phase. The bulk of the interviewing was completed by the end of January and a large portion of the coding of the out-of-school instruments was done during this period. Progress Report II was submitted to the funding agency.

Phase III: Analysis and Dissemination. February 1 to June 30, 1974.

Completion of coding, analysis of data, and writing of final reports was accomplished during this period. Demographic and manpower analysis was intensified and completed during this phase. Final reports were submitted to the funding agency, and arrangements made for the dissemination of these reports.

Project Organization

The project was under the direction of two Co-Directors, Roberto S. Guerra and Robert L. Armstrong, who in turn were responsible to Dr. Joseph E. Champagne, Associate Director for Research, and Dr. J. Earl Williams, Director of the Center for Human Resources. Chief consultant to the project was Dr. Sam Schulman, Professor of Sociology at the University of Houston. Jo Ann Verdin (Data Analysis), Terry Mullins (Manpower) and Tatcho Mindiola (Demography) served as Research Associates. Randall Dowdell (Interviewer) assisted in a major portion of the field work. Project staff trained and supervised specially contracted personnel to assist in field interviewing

and in coding phases of the project. Project staff received additional informal assistance and advice from a variety of sources: other Center staff, state and local educational personnel, manpower specialists throughout the state, and many other key informants in the communities surveyed.

PART II

BLACK YOUTHS AND THEIR PARENTS: VIEWS TOWARD OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

This section contains the major findings derived from the questionnaires administered to 1,531 Black students in 11 school districts and 23 high schools in Texas. It also reports on the results of three smaller samples of Black graduates, dropouts, and parents.

Chapter 2 analyzes and discusses the responses given by students to a variety of questions relating to themselves, school, and occupational education. Chapter 3 is a synopsis of the views given by 145 Black graduates and 136 Black dropouts and documents their occupational and/or training status. Chapter 4 focuses on a limited number of Black parents whose children were enrolled in vocational programs. An attempt was made to gauge the degree of parental involvement in school activities and ascertain parents' attitudes toward their children's occupational training programs in high school.

CHAPTER 2

A BLACK STUDENT PROFILE

In 1970 there were over 1.4 million Blacks in Texas. They comprise approximately 12 percent of the total state population, making them the third largest ethnic group in Texas. Blacks are highly concentrated in the large urban areas in East Texas. Seventy-five percent of all Blacks reside in metropolitan areas; of these 85 percent live in inner cities. Three cities in Texas account for two-thirds of the Black population--Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. Indications are that this trend will continue in the state.

Blacks in Texas are characterized by low income levels and their share of jobs is disproportionately higher in the semi-skilled and labor categories. Although the educational levels of Blacks is somewhat higher than that of Mexican Americans, their earnings do not reflect this. It is obvious that Blacks in Texas are still very much underemployed and discriminated against in the job market.

Black youth are plagued by many job related problems. Department of Labor statistics indicate that in May, 1974, their unemployment rate was over 33 percent, more than twice that of their white teenage counterparts. Poor preparation and training combined with discriminatory practices on the part of the dominant society continues to place Black youth in a disadvantageous position.

Occupational education is viewed by many people today as a means of learning a skill which will eventually enhance their earning capacities, especially for minorities. But do young Blacks perceive it as such or do they harbor negative attitudes toward such training at the secondary level? Are they optimistic about their future plans and do they see themselves as playing an important role in mainstream society? This chapter reports on the attitudes, aspirations, and perceptions of Black high school students in Texas and attempts to answer these as well as other questions.

A Note on Methodology

Eleven cities in Texas were selected for inclusion in the analysis of the Black student sample. They were selected because of relatively large enrollments of Black students at the secondary level. The eleven target communities, thus, included both large metropolitan areas and smaller urban areas in Central and East Texas: Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Galveston, Beaumont, Waco, Tyler, Marshall, and Port Arthur.

All administrations of the in-school instrument (Form A/B) were conducted during the Fall Semester of the 1973-1974 school year. Prior to working in each community members of the project staff established contact with school district authorities, especially with those persons directly concerned with occupational or vocational programs and counseling services for students. The purpose and scope of the study was explained to these individuals, and their collaboration was solicited. In no case was such collaboration refused.

School authorities in each community worked directly with project staff in the selection of local in-school samples. In these samples of Black students it was desired that approximately twice as many students in vocational/technical programs be represented as students in general academic programs, and that the vocational/technical students represent the spectrum of available vocational/technical programs. The desired total sample size in each community was approximately 200 students, with the majority being Black vocational education students. In order to cause as little interruption to overall school activities as possible the general format for student selection was by class or instructional unit, although in a number of instances local situations called for some modification of this procedure. The format required that rosters of both vocational/technical and general academic classes be made and that classes be

randomly selected until the approximate required number of students of both types had been reached. At appropriate times in school schedules, Form A/B was administered to entire classes by a member of the project staff or by a cooperating member of the school system. The A/B instrument was designed to be used during a single 45-55 minute class period which allowed for a short statement of purpose of the study, oral explanations of sections of the instrument, responses to questions posed by students, and self-administration of the instrument.

This analysis is based on the responses of the combined samples of Black students in the 11 target communities and utilizes data from 1,531 processed A/B questionnaires. Of these, 950 (62 percent) were completed by students in vocational/technical programs who answered the A version of the instrument. The remaining 581 (38 percent) were completed by students in general academic programs who responded to the B version. The A and B versions are identical except for four pages which only vocational/technical students were asked to complete. (Hereinafter vocational/technical students are referred to as VE students, and their contemporaries in general academic programs are referred to as Non-VE students.) As in the Mexican American survey, the majority of students who responded to this instrument cooperated fully and indicated that they enjoyed filling out the questionnaire.

The selection procedure resulted in samples which were unequal in size. The ratio of almost two to one in favor of VE students was part of the general sampling design, but the predominance of females was a chance factor. Since females outnumber males in both VE and Non-VE samples, it would be illogical to draw inferences to the VE and Non-VE populations in many instances without first accounting for differences by sex. As an example--and this will be elaborated upon later--without differentiating by sex, it might be concluded that in the selection of possible post-secondary technical education there was a decided

emphasis on training in the health fields by VE students. This, however, is not true for the entire VE sample, but for females within the sample; males were considerably less enthusiastic than their female counterparts about futures in health service careers. Because of the bias which sex might present in these data, the sex factor is noted whenever its influence is of importance to the analysis. For purposes of uniformity, all tables presented here include both "program"; i.e., VE or Non-VE, and sex of respondents.

Profile of Black Students

TABLE 1

VE and Non-VE Students Interviewed, by Sex

Sex	VE Students		Non-VE Students		Total Students	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	418	44.0%	226	38.9%	644	42.1%
Female	532	56.0%	355	61.1%	887	57.9%
Total	950	100.0%	581	100.0%	1,531	100.0%

Table 1 shows the number of VE and Non-VE students, males and females who completed the questionnaire. Within the VE sample there were 418 males and 532 females, and within the Non-VE sample there were 226 males and 355 females. Both males and females, on the average, were between 16 and 17 years of age. Eight of ten students were in either the eleventh or twelfth grades with a slight tendency for the VE sample to include more seniors than the Non-VE sample. Almost all were unmarried; those married were few and, with rare exception, female. All were Black (by self-identity). Nine out of ten of all students were born in Texas as were 70 percent of their parents. In general, parents of both VE and Non-VE students had attended, but did not graduate from, high school. Mothers of students had somewhat more education than fathers;

i.e., more were high school graduates, had post-high school training, and had attended or graduated from college.

Families of both VE and Non-VE students were quite similar in composition. The usual family consisted of mother (in 91 percent of the homes), father (in 65 percent of the homes) and siblings, usually two brothers and two sisters. About one in every ten homes included a grandparent and/or another relative. The principal wage earner in students' households was the father (cited as such by 57.3 percent of the VE students and 65.3 percent of the Non-VE students). In three of ten households the principal wage earner was the mother. In most homes both father and mother were employed at the time of this survey. A very limited number--12 percent of fathers and 2 percent of mothers--were members of labor unions. In two out of ten instances, at least some of the members of students' families had at one time worked in the migrant stream as agricultural laborers.

Using information supplied by students on the occupation and level of education of principal wage earners, it was possible to establish the relative socioeconomic status of their families. Using a formula developed by August B. Hollingshead,* the weighted totals of these two factors results in an "index of social position" which is then placed within one of five levels or classes:

> Class I typically includes those whose occupational status is very high and who have achieved professional or graduate degrees; i.e., scientists, university professors, physicians, high-ranking military officers and business executives.
>
> Class II includes other professionals and high status technicians who are university graduates such as engineers, accountants, and middle management personnel.
>
> Class III consists of those who are at the lower level of the "middle class"--small business owners, salesmen, highly skilled and well paid craftsmen.

* August B. Hollingshead, Two Factor Index of Social Position. (New Haven, Conn.: A. B. Hollingshead, 1957.)

Class IV includes those with a high school education or less but with abilities sufficient to be employed steadily at skilled blue-collar jobs; i.e., TV repairmen, small farmers, bartenders, printers and the like.

Class V, the lowest echelon, includes those who have little or no formal education and who work at semi-skilled or unskilled jobs which can be learned without the benefit of formal education.

Using Hollingshead's formula, the distribution by social status was markedly similar for all students: 2.5 percent were in Class I, 18.6 percent in Classes II and III (middle strata), and 78.9 percent in Classes IV and V (the lowest; i.e., those employed in low status jobs and with minimal formal education).

After High School, Then What?

A major portion of the A/B instrument was devoted to plans and preferences of students after graduation from high school. Virtually all of the sampled students intended to graduate and, hence, they were referring to options which, within a short period of time, should be theirs in reality. Students were given a list of seven usual alternatives to those who graduate: a steady job (as against a temporary or fill-in job before going on to something else); a four-year college or university; a junior college or technical institute for post-secondary vocational/technical training; self-employment; a union apprenticeship program; a government-supported training program; and military service. To each of these alternatives the student was asked to select among the choices: "I want to do this," "I am not sure," and "I don't want to do this." Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the seven alternatives was most preferred. Tables 2 and 3 refer to the choice patterns among these alternatives.

Most Preferred Post-High School Alternative

Table 2 indicates the most preferred post-high school alternative. In this regard there were some highly significant differences between VE and Non-VE

students as well as between the sexes within each of the subsamples. For VE students the first choice was a steady job, the second choice was college; for Non-VE students the choice pattern was reversed. For both groups, however, the third choice was the same: post-secondary vocational/technical training. These three alternatives constituted over eight of ten VE student preferences and almost nine of ten Non-VE student preferences. The other four alternatives appeared to be minimally important to all students.

TABLE 2

Percentages of VE and Non-VE Students', by Sex, Most Preferred Post-High School Alternative

Post-High School Alternative	VE Students			Non-VE Students		
	Male N=366	Female N=494	Total N=860	Male N=200	Female N=320	Total N=520
Steady job	39.3%	38.5%	38.8%	23.5%	34.4%	30.2%
Four-year college	26.0%	34.0%	30.6%	47.5%	40.9%	43.5%
Advanced vocational/ technical training	13.1%	16.4%	15.0%	8.5%	16.6%	13.5%
Own business	8.2%	3.0%	5.2%	5.5%	1.9%	3.3%
Union apprenticeship	0.8%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
Government training program	2.7%	3.0%	2.9%	3.5%	2.5%	2.9%
Military service	9.8%	4.9%	7.0%	11.0%	3.8%	6.5%

Among the three major choices in Table 2 the strong preference for a college education among Non-VE students is not surprising since the general academic programs seldom prepare students in skill areas of special value outside the educational arena. Like other students in general secondary tracks in Texas, these Black students look forward to achieving employable qualities through higher education. Even with the Non-VE students, however, a steady job after graduation was appealing, with almost one-third opting for this as a most preferred alternative.

VE students were much more pragmatic than their Non-VE peers--with or without marketable skills; they are more anxious to enter the world of work. And, even though their high school training had not been oriented towards university entrance, almost one-third found this alternative most preferable.

The least appealing alternative for both subsamples was to enter a union apprenticeship program. Such programs, though not easily entered, provide a more secure job future than an immediate steady job after graduation, yet this was selected by less than one percent of all students. Perhaps lack of knowledge about such programs or knowing that many unions discriminate against Black entrants contributed to the failure to choose this alternative. It may also be that general lack of the knowledge of the mechanics of government-sponsored training programs--various MDTA programs, Model Cities programs, and the like--contributed to the poor showing of this alternative.

Although military service has been seen as an opportunity for status, advancement, and security to minority enlistees, it is obvious that, perhaps with the advent of a peacetime military force, it has a diminished appeal to Black youth today.

The patterns in Table 2 for the subsamples as a whole change when sexual differences are added to the analysis. Proportionately more females than males among VE students wish to go to college, although for both sexes the first choice is a steady job. Among Non-VE students the desire is greater for females than for males to seek a steady job, and more males than females wish to go to college. Significantly more VE male students than Non-VE male students desire post-secondary advanced technical training. Females, in general, are more strongly inclined to advanced training than males, and there is virtually no difference in preference for this alternative by their high school program. Males in both subsamples show a greater preference for self-employment than

females. Twice the proportion of VE male students and three times the proportion of Non-VE male students prefer military service than their female peers. What is surprising is that 4.9 percent of VE female students and 3.8 percent of Non-VE female students consider the military a first preference.

Degree of Preference for Post-Secondary Alternatives

Greater insight into post-secondary aspirations may be gained from Table 3. As mentioned previously, students were given the opportunity to express a number of preferences for each post-secondary alternative; i.e., they were not restricted to the choice of a specific alternative but could react preferentially to them all. Students indicated their degrees of preference or rejection of an alternative by checking one of three categories: "I want to do this," "I am not sure," or "I don't want to do this." The alternatives ranged from getting a steady job to joining the military service.

An illustration of the substantive difference between Tables 2 and 3 would be the response to the alternative of military service. Table 2 is based upon the forced choice of the most preferred alternative. Table 3 is a synthesis of the seven distinct, but related items, wherein students could express definite preference for more than one alternative--a not illogical situation for high school students, few of whom have really made commitments to a single alternative. It can thus be seen that approximately twice as many students, male and female, VE and Non-VE, consider military service as a preferred alternative within a range of possible alternatives than those who would select it as the most preferred alternative.

Definite preference is indicated by the "I want to" response. In this regard only one alternative, that of a steady job, appears as a modal definite preference for VE students. Not quite as strongly, a steady job is one of two

definite preferences for Non-VE students; it is followed very closely by going to a four-year college or university. Using the "I don't want to" choice as an indicator of definite non-preference, both VE and Non-VE students express non-preference for the same four alternatives: self-employment, union apprenticeship programs, government-sponsored training programs, and military service. Lack of certainty, or neutrality, expressed by the "I'm not sure" choice, is found among VE students regarding university study and advanced technical training, and among Non-VE students only as regards advanced technical training. An overview of Table 3 would indicate that only three post-high school alternatives are preferred by all students: a steady job, a college education, and post-secondary technical training, with a steady job an overriding strongest preference. As noted in a previous report, the importance of employment after graduation for Mexican American youth is a pragmatic consideration of the disadvantaged because their life circumstances have made them pragmatists.* There is little doubt that poverty and perceived lack of opportunity also make Black youth pragmatic about the immediate future.

Differences as well as degrees of difference may be seen between the sexes within both subsamples in Table 3. For VE students, males and females were equally emphatic about a post-graduation steady job, but significantly more females than males wanted a college education, and significantly more males than females wanted post-secondary technical training. For all of the four less preferred alternatives, VE male students were more positively inclined than VE female students. For Non-VE students, both sexes again equally desired a job. The situation is reversed, however, for the other two major alternatives from what is observed for VE students. For Non-VE students, it was the males who were more strongly inclined towards college work, the females toward advanced

*Mexican American Youth and Vocational Education in Texas. (Center for Human Resources, University of Houston, 1973.)

technical training. (As will be seen subsequently, a good deal of this female preference for post-secondary technical training is probably a function of desire to enter associate or certificate programs in nursing and other health-related paraprofessional areas.) Non-VE male students indicated a stronger preference than Non-VE female students for all minor alternatives except government-sponsored training programs. The slightly greater preference of females in this area is not statistically significant, and may be a matter of chance, not truly indicative of stronger preference at all. (The same observation can also be made regarding the slightly greater male preference for such programs among VE students.)

TABLE 3

The Opinions of VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, Concerning Post-High School Alternatives, in Percentages of Total Response

Post-High School Alternative	VE Students			Non-VE Students		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Steady job						
I want to	76.5%	75.4%	75.9%	64.3%	71.0%	68.4%
I'm not sure	18.7%	18.6%	18.7%	22.9%	19.3%	20.7%
I don't want to	4.7%	6.0%	5.5%	12.9%	9.7%	10.9%
Total response	379	499	878	210	331	541
Four-year college						
I want to	33.3%	40.2%	37.3%	59.2%	50.5%	53.9%
I'm not sure	40.4%	36.1%	38.0%	28.9%	29.6%	29.3%
I don't want to	26.2%	23.7%	24.8%	11.8%	19.9%	16.7%
Total response	366	485	851	211	321	532
Advanced vocational/ technical training						
I want to	32.0%	26.4%	28.8%	19.4%	25.8%	23.3%
I'm not sure	37.4%	43.3%	40.8%	40.3%	39.3%	39.7%
I don't want to	30.6%	30.2%	30.4%	40.3%	34.9%	37.0%
Total response	366	473	839	201	318	519

Post-High School Alternative	VE Students			Non-VE Students		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Own business						
I want to	25.3%	12.6%	18.1%	22.5%	7.3%	13.2%
I'm not sure	38.5%	28.4%	32.8%	31.5%	28.7%	29.8%
I don't want to	36.3%	59.0%	49.0%	46.0%	64.0%	57.0%
Total response	364	468	832	200	317	517
Union apprenticeship						
I want to	8.9%	4.3%	6.2%	6.7%	2.3%	4.0%
I'm not sure	40.7%	24.3%	31.3%	35.9%	25.7%	29.7%
I don't want to	50.4%	71.4%	62.5%	57.4%	72.0%	66.3%
Total response	349	469	818	195	307	502
Government training program						
I want to	18.8%	15.1%	16.6%	10.7%	14.7%	13.2%
I'm not sure	39.8%	38.7%	39.2%	41.6%	43.6%	42.8%
I don't want to	41.5%	46.2%	44.2%	47.7%	41.7%	44.0%
Total response	352	465	817	197	312	509
Military service						
I want to	22.9%	9.9%	15.6%	16.3%	8.0%	11.3%
I'm not sure	32.5%	19.5%	25.2%	29.7%	23.8%	26.1%
I don't want to	44.6%	70.6%	59.2%	54.0%	68.2%	62.6%
Total response	363	466	829	202	311	513

Type of Job Desired

All students were given the following instructions: "Now, let's imagine that you were going to look for a steady job right after graduation (even if you don't really plan to look for a job). What specific job, or what kind of a job, do you think you would get?" This item was an attempt to get students' realistic appraisals of their own positions with only a high school diploma within the job market. Their responses are summarized by broad classes in Table 4. The classes are based upon the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) system of classification. DOT classes include occupations that are related to one another or require similar types of formal and informal education or training. Although there are several thousand DOT specific titles, when grouped

into 1000s series (from 1000s to 9000s), as noted later, these tend to be quite inclusive. With some exceptions, higher numbered DOT occupations reflect higher status, more exacting preparation required and less manual, more intellectual involvement. This table indicates typical job types associated with each of the classes.

TABLE 4

Expected Type of Job (by DOT Classification) Immediately After Graduation for VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

DOT Classification of Job Type		VE Students		Non-VE Students	
		Male N=344	Female N=476	Male N=191	Female N=322
1000	Agricultural operators and managers	0.3%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
2000	Laborers, semi-skilled, operatives	11.6%	8.4%	19.4%	10.3%
3000	Craftsmen, skilled, minor technical, supervisory	36.1%	22.7%	16.2%	11.8%
4000	Higher status technical	21.2%	9.5%	17.3%	4.4%
5000	Small businessmen, management	6.1%	1.3%	6.8%	1.2%
6000	Nonmanual sales, clerical	7.3%	34.9%	19.9%	47.8%
7000	Professionals, highly trained technical	16.6%	17.9%	16.2%	21.1%
8000	Entertainers, models, musicians, athletes	0.9%	4.2%	4.2%	3.4%
9000	Homemakers		0.2%		0.0%

Both male and female VE students indicated a relatively realistic appraisal of their marketability. Males expected to find jobs in the 3000 and 4000 DOT series, basically in technical areas. Females' expectations of placement were greatest in the 6000 series--sales and clerical work--and also in the skilled and technical work in the 3000 series. As will be seen later, there was a

strong feeling among female VE students that these jobs would be associated with their vocational training in high school.

Non-VE male and female students also exhibited a generally realistic orientation towards the job market, but their choices indicated that they lacked the occupational skills which their VE peers felt that they possessed. Males saw themselves most easily fitting into nonmanual sales and clerical work and as semi-skilled workers. Females most emphatically saw job opportunities in the sales/clerical area. It is of note that comparatively more Non-VE students than VE students of both sexes saw themselves fitting into the job market at the 2000 level, which demands the least technical skills. The second most cited area of expected jobs for Non-VE female students (and to a lesser degree, it appeared as relatively important for all other students) was in the 7000 series, and this does not indicate realistic self-appraisal. In general, this DOT class includes the major professions (physicians, engineers, lawyers, and the like) and technical jobs which require university-level technical preparation. It is obvious that many female students were unaware of the fact that one could not be a "nurse" or a "dental hygienist" after simply earning a high school diploma. Women in their communities who wore white uniforms and worked in hospitals or dentists' offices and who may have been known as "nurses" or "dental hygienists" were, in reality, hospital aides or office receptionists, neither of which requires more than a secondary education, if that. Confusion in the minds of poorly informed high school students is not an illogical result. Confusion may also be a function of inadequate occupational guidance and career orientation for which this report will offer some suggestions in a later section.

Expected Salary and Location of Job

Students were asked how much they thought they would earn per week at the jobs they might get upon graduation. Regardless of the fact that some may have

exaggerated their earning potential the median expectation for all students was $125. VE male students expected more than others: $160. They were followed by Non-VE male students: $140. The median expectation for both VE and Non-VE females was $100. It appears that, even though some students were confused about what to call their possible post-high school jobs, their expectations of payment for their services are within the realm of the plausible.

TABLE 5

Expectation of Location of First Post-High School Job for VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Location of First Post-High School Job	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male N=403	Female N=519	Male N=221	Female N=342
In home city	58.8%	66.9%	55.2%	54.1%
In Texas, close to home	19.1%	13.5%	20.4%	15.8%
In Texas, far from home	7.7%	5.8%	7.7%	7.6%
Outside of Texas	14.4%	13.9%	16.7%	22.5%

Again, referring to these possible jobs, students were asked to indicate where such jobs might be. Their responses are summarized in Table 5. At this point attitudes toward leaving one's home city are not of primary concern; they are separately treated elsewhere. Of importance here is the students' evaluations of available opportunities by general geographical area. All students see such opportunities first in their home communities, with VE students, especially VE female students, more definite in this regard. Non-VE female students, on the other hand, are those who see the least opportunity for jobs in their home cities, and, more than others, see job opportunities outside the State of Texas. In general, VE students see more job possibilities in or close to home communities than Non-VE students.

Preferences in Post-High School Training and Education

In the same vein as the previous set of items dealing with job possibilities after graduation, all students were asked to respond to a number of items on college or university education and post-secondary vocational/technical training, even though they did not list these as major preferences. For a college education, both subsamples preferred first to attend a state university, a local community college for two years and than a university, and, lastly, a private university. Although ranked the same, the magnitude of preference differs for VE and Non-VE students. VE students more strongly evidenced an interest in attending a community college before proceeding with university work, while Non-VE students are more predisposed to immediately attend state universities and colleges, large or small. The areas in which students state they might specialize, or major, are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

Possible Major Field in College for VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
Possible Major Field	Male N=396	Female N=512	Male N=220	Female N=345
Education	6.6%	16.8%	5.0%	20.9%
Sciences	2.3%	3.3%	4.5%	2.6%
Engineering	20.7%	0.6%	18.2%	0.6%
Technical fields	34.6%	2.9%	18.6%	1.4%
Social sciences	2.8%	2.1%	5.0%	3.5%
Humanities	1.8%	4.3%	1.4%	2.9%
Business administration	8.3%	25.0%	10.9%	21.4%
Professional	10.1%	18.9%	22.3%	29.9%
Other	12.9%	26.0%	14.1%	16.8%

The specialization areas in Table 6 correspond to major divisions or emphases at most colleges and universities. As presented to the students examples of each were given; i.e., sciences (like biology, chemistry, or physics), business administration (like accounting, retail management). Significant differences between VE and Non-VE students appeared in the areas of the technical fields and the professions, the former chosen more often by VE students, the latter by Non-VE students. The residual category "other" also was disproportionately favored by VE students, mostly female, and most of these "other" preferences were in areas like home economics and health associated disciplines. Male VE students indicated strong preferences for technical fields and engineering while female VE students indicated a strong preference for business administration. Male Non-VE students showed strong interest in the professions while female Non-VE students even more definitely were interested in the professions as well as in business administration and education. In general, by both sex and high school program, students saw a logical follow-through at the university level with the orientations toward education and training already established in their secondary programs.

TABLE 7

Preferred Type of Institution for Advanced Vocational/Technical Training by VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Preferred Type of Institution	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male N=405	Female N=514	Male N=222	Female N=346
Junior college	21.5%	30.2%	23.4%	26.0%
Public technical school	52.6%	42.0%	50.5%	48.8%
Private technical school	18.5%	16.3%	17.1%	10.4%
Private business college	7.4%	11.5%	9.0%	14.7%

Table 7 portrays the type of institution which students might select for advanced technical or vocational training. Both subsamples indicated a decided preference for public technical schools or institutes for such training, males more emphatically than females. The second choice for both VE and Non-VE students was junior or community colleges, but here females expressed stronger preferences than males. The third ranked selection for VE students was private technical schools, and the last private business colleges. These last two were also the preferences for male Non-VE students, but they were reversed for female Non-VE students.

TABLE 8

Preferred Program in Advanced Vocational/Technical Training
by VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex,
in Percentages of Total Response

	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
Preferred Program	Male N=396	Female N=486	Male N=213	Female N=336
Health care	6.1%	29.4%	10.3%	39.0%
Business	3.5%	20.6%	7.5%	19.3%
Agriculture	2.3%	0.0%	0.9%	0.6%
Home economics	1.8%	7.4%	0.9%	5.1%
Data processing	13.9%	12.1%	23.9%	7.1%
Auto mechanics, paint and body	26.8%	1.0%	14.6%	0.0%
Air conditioning, refrigeration	7.1%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%
Radio and TV repair	8.8%	0.2%	5.6%	0.0%
Cosmetology	0.5%	7.2%	0.0%	3.6%
Drafting	8.3%	0.0%	11.7%	0.3%
Modeling	1.3%	11.5%	1.4%	12.2%
Airline job	2.8%	7.2%	7.5%	8.6%
Building and construction	10.9%	0.2%	5.6%	0.3%
Other	6.1%	3.1%	6.6%	3.9%

Table 8 indicates the type of programs in which students would enroll if they were to go on to advanced post-secondary technical training. VE male students showed an inclination to continue in post-secondary training that to some degree resembled secondary-level programs but, perhaps, at a more demanding level or which were not available at a secondary level; i.e., auto mechanics, air conditioning and refrigeration, radio/television repair, and building and construction account for more than half (53.6 percent) of the choices of VE males, and these are programs which may be seen as follow-throughs of secondary vocational programs. To a lesser degree this preference for follow-through programs was true of female VE students, with a major exception: a relatively large number desire to enter post-secondary training in the area of health care. Non-VE male students had a more dispersed pattern of choices than VE male students with only one program attracting a good deal of interest--data processing. Non-VE female students were most interested, significantly more than their female VE peers, in health care. Health care programs were the preferences of one-third of all female students of both subsamples combined. Health care fields are obviously attractive to young Black women who see in them, after a reasonably short period of post-secondary training, a means of gaining personal status as a paraprofessional, ease of placement, and job security.

Students were asked their preferences for location of the institution where they might receive education or training after graduation. The response categories were the same as for Table 5, but the focus of the item is distinct. Table 5 deals with expectations of job location while Table 9 deals with preferences for school location. The response patterns in Table 9 are notably different from those of Table 5. Students slightly prefer to attend school in or near their home towns but a sizeable number (the modal choice for all students) would prefer to do so outside of Texas. The more venturesome are Non-VE students

and, of these, females desire out-of-state schooling slightly more than males. It seems that the more prestigous Black colleges are out of state, and this perhaps might influence their preferences.

TABLE 9

Preferred Location of Post-Secondary Educational Institution by VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
Preferred Location	Male N=407	Female N=522	Male N=219	Female N=349
In home city	23.8%	27.2%	17.8%	21.5%
In Texas, close to home	28.5%	32.4%	30.6%	29.8%
In Texas, far from home	17.0%	14.0%	19.2%	14.0%
Outside of Texas	30.7%	26.4%	32.4%	34.7%

General Preferences in Education

Regardless of their particular post-high school aspirations, students were asked to summarize in a single item what they would prefer if they could achieve as much schooling as they desired. Their responses are presented in Table 10. Very few indicated that they wished no further schooling of any sort. VE male students in almost equal numbers opted for three chief alternatives: high school graduation, post-high school technical training, and college education. The most important choice for both VE and Non-VE female students was a college education. The most definite option for a college education was given by Non-VE males. It is certain that if education were the only objective, Black students represented in our subsamples would prefer to attend and graduate from a college or university. Where the realistic possibility of a steady job is included in the spectrum of alternatives, however, only Non-VE students retain their strong desire to progress to university-level work (Table 2), and

two-thirds of them do not dismiss a job as one of their desired alternatives (Table 3).

TABLE 10

Most Desired Educational Objective of VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Most Desired Educational Objective	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male N=409	Female N=522	Male N=224	Female N=351
Never go to school again	1.7%	2.1%	0.9%	2.0%
Complete high school	24.9%	17.2%	13.8%	14.0%
Complete post-high school technical program	25.4%	16.1%	16.1%	15.7%
Junior or community college	12.5%	18.4%	6.7%	12.3%
Four-year college or university	25.9%	32.4%	40.6%	36.2%
Graduate or professional studies	9.5%	13.8%	21.9%	19.9%

Apprenticeship Programs and Other Vocational Programs

Although a union apprenticeship program was listed as a post-secondary alternative, few students expressed a desire to enter such a program. Previous experience with student reaction to this alternative led the research team to doubt whether students really knew about these programs. Thus, students were asked directly about their knowledge of apprenticeship programs. Three out of four VE and Non-VE students admitted that they did not know what they were. An attempt was also made to see if students knew about the availability of special vocational/technical alternatives which they might enter after graduation. Half of the VE students and almost 60 percent of the Non-VE students did not. Somehow knowledge of training opportunities beyond high school through labor unions and other special programs is not well communicated to students, or if they are informed, they consider such knowledge to be of minimal importance and quickly forget it.

Marriage and Working Women

The attitude towards marriage as a post-secondary alternative for students was also pursued. This appeared to be an important possible option for female students. When asked if they planned to marry within a year after graduation, 16.7 percent of all male students and 22 percent of all female students indicated that they were considering this possibility. VE students more than Non-VE students were considering marriage. Specifically regarding female graduates who marry, students were asked to choose among several alternatives which they considered to be the best role for such young women. Their answers are presented in Table 11. The modal response for VE and Non-VE students, both males and females, is strikingly similar: that the young married female graduate should

TABLE 11

Preferred Alternatives for Recently Graduated Female Students of VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
Preferred Alternative	Male N=396	Female N=522	Male N=209	Female N=350
Stay at home, care for home, family	31.6%	18.2%	20.6%	14.0%
Work part-time, care for home as possible	39.1%	40.0%	41.1%	40.9%
Work full-time, share home chores with husband	25.3%	34.5%	27.3%	32.9%
Other	4.0%	7.3%	11.0%	12.3%

work part-time and, at the same time, do her best to care for her home. Differences between VE and Non-VE students are sharply drawn for the other major choices. More males than females favored a traditional role and felt that the married female graduate should not work but stay at home and care for her home and family, while females more than males favored a more egalitarian role for

the graduate in that she should work full-time and share household chores with her spouse. VE males, more than their Non-VE counterparts, strongly supported the stay-at-home view of the young married woman.

Ideal and Expected Future Jobs

Three items in the A/B questionnaire dealt with "ideal" and "expected" future career possibilities as seen by students. These are summarized in Tables 12, 13, and 14. Students were asked to name, as specifically as they could, the lifetime kind of work they would most desire if, somehow, they were "completely free to choose any job." Their responses were reduced to major DOT categories, and their ideal job preferences are presented in Table 12. In general,

TABLE 12

Ideal Type of Job for VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

DOT Classification of Job Type		VE Students		Non-VE Students	
		Male N=339	Female N=480	Male N=198	Female N=330
1000	Agricultural operators and managers	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
2000	Laborers, semi-skilled, operatives	2.7%	5.4%	3.0%	6.1%
3000	Craftsmen, skilled, minor technical, supervisory	27.7%	10.6%	11.6%	8.8%
4000	Higher status technical	15.9%	9.6%	9.1%	3.9%
5000	Small businessmen, management	12.4%	3.5%	15.7%	1.8%
6000	Nonmanual sales, clerical	3.2%	17.9%	4.0%	19.4%
7000	Professionals, highly trained technical	32.7%	42.0%	44.4%	49.4%
8000	Entertainers, models, musicians, athletes	5.0%	10.0%	12.1%	10.0%
9000	Homemakers	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.6%

VE students appeared to favor craft and technical jobs more than Non-VE students, while the opposite situation was true for professional and glamour type jobs. Even though the relative number of Non-VE students was greater in preference for professional jobs, this was the category most strongly preferred by students in both subsamples. Aspiration levels of students as a whole were high; very few opted for demeaning or low status jobs.

Looking at job preferences by both high school program and sex, as seen in Table 12, some interesting differences may be seen. Females, significantly more than their male counterparts, desired future employment in the professional category. (It bears note that, on examination of specifically named jobs, the bulk of the professional level jobs noted by female students were in nursing and allied health fields.) The 7000 series in the DOT system of classification is quite broad and diffuse. It unites occupations which undoubtedly yield higher status to those holding them but, at the same time, may require very distinct and varying training or education: the learned professions, such as medicine or law, requiring professional education beyond college; engineering and teaching, requiring a college baccalaureate degree; nursing, which may be achieved through two-, three-, or four-year post-secondary education; and professions like photographer or preacher, which may range from much formal education to very little. Among both VE and Non-VE students, males more than females prefer occupations as craftsmen/skilled workers. For VE male students this category was second only to the professional category, an indication of the fact that these high school males see their vocational training (or, perhaps, their vocational orientation) reaching some degree of fulfillment in the labor market. Though less pronounced, the same VE/Non-VE, male/female pattern was seen in the higher status technical category. In the small businessman category males again outnumbered females, but Non-VE males showed a somewhat stronger preference than males in

vocational programs. Nonmanual sales and clerical occupations were overwhelmingly a feminine preference. In the glamour category--entertainers, musicians, models, and the like--preferences were reversed, by sex, within the subsamples: although the numbers were small, it was a strong feminine option among VE students and a slightly more masculine option among Non-VE students. Since, in most high schools, varsity athletes are college-bound--to continue as athletes at the university level and, hopefully, in athletic careers beyond the university--they would be found in the Non-VE subsample. It is probably this situation that contributed to differences in male preferences for the 8000 DOT category.

Of major interest, because of the few female students who expressed preference for it, is the career of homemaker. It must be recalled that the great majority of all students come from homes of low socioeconomic status where the role model of the Black non-working homemaker is rarely seen and with which it is difficult to identify. It may also be surmised that some of the female students who, when given free choice for a future, reject the wife-mother option when so many other more gratifying and fulfilling possibilities may be selected. As will be discussed later, almost one-third of the female students in the VE sample were enrolled in home economics programs; obviously their interest is in the occupational advantages such programs may give them while possible advantages for potential homemakers are secondary.

Reasons for Wanting Ideal Future Jobs

After students were asked about their ideal future job, they were asked to indicate why they wanted this job through a check list of factors that might influence their preferences. Their responses are shown in Table 13. For both VE and Non-VE students, the fact that their preferred jobs paid well, or they thought they paid well, was of major importance. Next most important for both

subsamples was the fact that such jobs would allow those holding them to help other people. The response distributions in each of the 11 factors showed

TABLE 13

VE and Non-VE Students' Reasons for Wanting Ideal Job, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Reasons for Wanting Ideal Job	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male N=407	Female N=526	Male N=224	Female N=348
This is an important job	16.0%	23.4%	15.6%	20.4%
It pays good money	53.8%	40.3%	54.9%	33.3%
Other people will look up to me	7.6%	5.5%	8.0%	3.7%
It matches my abilities	17.9%	23.2%	17.0%	22.4%
I can be my own boss	12.0%	4.9%	12.5%	2.6%
I know a lot about it	16.0%	9.9%	11.2%	8.9%
It offers security	6.4%	8.2%	7.6%	3.5%
My parents want me to	2.2%	2.9%	1.3%	2.9%
It is exciting work	16.2%	32.5%	18.3%	28.2%
I can help other people	21.4%	38.0%	23.7%	46.8%
Other reasons	5.4%	6.7%	5.4%	9.8%

no statistical significance between VE and Non-VE students except for the factor which dealt with helping others; here Non-VE students showed a much more marked preference than VE students. When accounting for sex as well as program also depicted in Table 13, seven of the 11 factors were found to be statistically significant. It is evident that both males and females in the subsamples look for distinct gratification in their ideal careers regardless of the track they might have followed in high school. Females placed considerably more emphasis than males on the help their ideal jobs might give to others, on the excitement such jobs might offer, and upon their intrinsic importance. Males, on the other

hand, were more cognizant of the wage earning potential of ideal jobs, more aware of what the job entailed, and more favorable toward the possibility of being their own bosses. Another significant factor of lesser magnitude relates to security of the jobs. Whereas slightly more females than males found this to be of importance among VE students, more than twice the number of males than females felt this to be important among Non-VE students. In general, for both subsamples, males responded with a distinct awareness of the more prosaic advantages in their ideal jobs, while females were inclined to be more impressed by humanitarian and exciting aspects of such jobs.

Expected Lifetime Jobs

Directly comparable to Table 12 is Table 14. This latter table synthesizes responses to an item parallel to that of the ideal job. Students were told that "sometimes we are not always able to do what we want most," and were asked, "What kind of job do you really expect to have most of your life?" As might be surmised, realities were not as elaborate or imaginative as were ideals. Celebrity and glamour jobs and professional jobs were diminished for both VE and Non-VE students and for both males and females. The movement down the status ladder was, in large measure, absorbed by the crafts and semi-skilled, nonmanual sales and clerical, and by homemaking for females; while for males the greatest absorption took place at the laborer level and the higher status technical level. Non-VE students still indicated more of a possibility than VE students in the professions (and, once again, nursing and allied health fields for females strongly influenced this choice). VE students more than Non-VE students significantly saw their real futures in the crafts and higher technical jobs. Although sights had been lowered for both subsamples and for both sexes, Non-VE students seemed to retain more idealism regarding their futures than did their more pragmatic VE student peers.

TABLE 14

Expected Future Job Type (DOT Classification)
of VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex,
in Percentages of Total Response

DOT Classification of Job Type		VE Students		Non-VE Students	
		Male N=283	Female N=439	Male N=172	Female N=301
1000	Agricultural operators and managers	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
2000	Laborers, semi-skilled, operatives	8.5%	5.5%	9.9%	7.3%
3000	Craftsmen, skilled, minor technical, supervisory	30.4%	15.3%	11.1%	10.0%
4000	Higher status technical	23.7%	6.4%	15.1%	3.3%
5000	Small businessmen, management	7.1%	3.2%	10.5%	0.7%
6000	Nonmanual sales, clerical	2.8%	21.9%	5.2%	23.3%
7000	Professionals, highly trained technical	24.7%	38.0%	36.6%	44.5%
8000	Entertainers, models, musicians, athletes	2.8%	4.3%	11.6%	6.0%
9000	Homemakers	0.0%	4.3%	0.0%	5.0%

School, Work, and Life

Thirty-four items in Form A/B were concerned with several topics. These topics included school and school programs, success and the world of work, the role of women and family relationships. These items were designed to be answered on a four-point agree-disagree scale.

The items were phrased so that a respondent could indicate his personal degree of agreement or disagreement. Examples of these items are: "my family is very important to me"; "I think that people should work for what they get"; "I like school very much"; and "I think that girls should not be encouraged to work."

In general, all students indicated that they liked school and were not desirous of dropping out. Non-VE students more than VE students felt that education was the best way for them to get ahead in life and were somewhat more definite in believing that competition in school made them better students. Both subsamples strongly agreed that schooling should give them general and specific occupational skills as well as sufficient information about jobs and careers so that they might better prepare for the world of work while still in school. Both groups also strongly agreed, with somewhat more emphasis given to the idea by Non-VE students, that high school should prepare a student for college, too. VE students placed greater emphasis on the fact that high school should prepare them for post-secondary vocational/technical training although both groups agreed that this, too, should be a function of their schooling and that advanced technical training was a good post-high school alternative. Non-VE students, more so than VE students, rejected the idea that VE students were "different" from other students at school although both could not accept the idea. All students agreed that vocational/technical training in high school was "a good idea," with VE students more emphatic in this regard.

Although, as might be expected, VE students were more definite in their agreement that "all students should take some vocational education while in high school," both groups endorsed the idea (over 80 percent of the VE students and 70 percent of the Non-VE students responded either "agree" or "strongly agree" to this item). The same pattern was shown by the response to items which stated that vocational/technical education in high school helps a student to learn marketable skills, to get a job after graduation, and to achieve successful life as an adult. Both groups rejected the concept that the vocational option in school was a way of getting out of uninteresting courses.

Both VE and Non-VE students felt that it was important to plan for their futures and that it was of importance to stay in school rather than drop out and go less prepared into the labor market. The item "I think that people should work for what they get" was endorsed by nine out of ten VE and Non-VE students. The retention of the idea of future educational opportunity, the need to plan ahead, and a defense of the work ethic all appear to be related to the strong support given by all students to the concept that they must "get ahead in life." To a greater degree VE students equated success in life with earning more money while Non-VE students were slightly more supportive of success equated with "being satisfied and happy with what you are doing." It should be noted, however, that both groups generally rejected money and material goods and accepted satisfaction and happiness as criteria for success in life. Both groups felt that the chances were good that they would get good jobs in the future and that they would achieve success. With little difference between them, all students responded that they liked to work, that work was something that had to be done by everyone, and that only by work could anyone get ahead. Again, with very little difference, all students agreed that success should not be gauged by education achieved but by what a person "does on his own."

There were no meaningful differences between VE and Non-VE students on two items dealing with familial and other close relationships. Almost 99 percent of all students either strongly agreed or agreed that their families were important to them. Over half of both VE students and Non-VE students believed that it is important to live and work close to one's family, relatives, and friends. It is thus evident that students in our sample felt strong ties to their families and that a considerable number of them would want to orient their work careers so that they might maintain proximity to those whom they hold dear.

Students' attitudes toward the role of women vis-a-vis education and the world of work were inquired into by three items. Both subsamples generally disagreed with the idea that high school education--or less--was sufficient for females because "they will get married anyway." VE students, however, were not as much in disagreement with this as were Non-VE students. Both groups were also in disagreement, and in very much the same proportions, to the statement that females should not be encouraged to work. When asked to respond to the idea that young married women should be encouraged to continue their education after high school, VE students agreed, but Non-VE students agreed much more forcefully.

In the 34 opinion items statistically significant differences between VE and Non-VE students were found in 14 items. When, however, analysis was made by both program and sex, 21 items proved to be statistically significant. In essence this indicates that male/female responses, or male/female responses interacting with VE/Non-VE classification, were much more decisive for analytical purposes than VE/Non-VE responses alone. It thus seems important to look at these differences in areas where the sex of the respondent may be of major consequence in understanding response patterns: usual close relationships and the role of women. As mentioned previously, all students felt that their families were very important to them, and this remained so when the sexual difference factor was added. True, females more strongly agreed with this than males, but the magnitude of difference was very slight and was not significant. There was, however, a significant difference regarding living close to one's family, relatives, and friends. Interestingly, it was the males who were more prone to such proximity. It may be conjectured that Black females at 16 or 17 years of age are considered to be, and consider themselves to be, more adult than males of the same age. If this is so, then it is plausible that young adult women would be more willing to surrender the support of usual close relationships in favor of personal independence.

Those items dealing with the role of women evidenced the most emphatic differences between the sexes. When presented with the idea that high school education is enough for females since their future was marriage, all students disagreed. However, females are much more opposed to this concept than males, and Non-VE students more opposed than VE students (Non-VE female, 40.8 percent; VE female, 31.3 percent; Non-VE male, 21.5 percent; VE male, 17.6 percent). When responding to the item concerning discouraging females from working, differences were sexual and had little to do with program. Four of ten females absolutely rejected the idea while only 24 percent of the males absolutely rejected it. In regards to young married women continuing their education after high school, once again differences by both sex and program were evidenced. Most strongly supporting the idea were Non-VE female students (50.3 percent); next, VE female students (46 percent); next, Non-VE male students (40.1 percent); and last, VE male students (30.2 percent). It would appear that females, in general, are much more supportive of expanding opportunities for women than are males, and that the subgroup least supportive of such broadening of opportunities is that of VE male students.

Parents*

A number of items were included in the A/B instrument about parents of students. As students viewed their parents, with little or no difference by program or sex, they felt that their parents knew little about what went on in the school setting although they were interested in their children's work at school and talked to them about it. Parents did not help students with their school work and were not active in those school activities which might have involved them.

*A subsequent chapter discusses what Black parents say about their children's schooling, especially those enrolled in VE programs.

In this regard, more parents of Non-VE students than of VE students participated in P.T.A. organization functions. Although students reported that their parents encouraged them to stay in school, the encouragement was significantly greater by parents of Non-VE students. According to their responses, parents of female students were more supportive of post-secondary education than those of male students, and parents of Non-VE students were more supportive of this alternative than those of VE students. In summary, as students saw them, their parents were interested in their progress in school and supportive of school work but made little effort to incorporate themselves in school affairs. Non-VE female students reported more parent interest and involvement than all other students.

Jobs and Careers

A major part of the A/B instrument concerned the preparation of students for the world of work and their attitudes toward work. One series of items sought to verify how much difficulty students perceived that they might have in basic job-hunting problems. Twelve problems of this type were named, and students were requested to indicate the degree of "trouble" each might give them ("no trouble," "some trouble," "a lot of trouble") if they were seeking a job. Using scale values of 1, 2, and 3 for responses--the lower the scale value the less the "trouble"--and then securing the arithmetic mean for responses by each item, indications of level of difficulty were computed; i.e., if the mean of an item is close to 1, the problem represented by the item is hardly troublesome; if the mean is close to 2, the problem is somewhat troublesome; and, if the mean is close to 3, the problem is very troublesome. Looking at all mean scale values for items in Table 15, it is apparent that students, in general, saw none of these problems as very troublesome to them. Least problematic for all students was knowing how

to dress when looking for a job, and those which may be somewhat troublesome were lack of work experience and lack of skills. All of the other problems listed in Table 15 presented minimal or only moderate amounts of difficulty.

TABLE 15

Degree of Difficulty Expected in Job-Hunting Factors by VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex

(1=No Trouble; 2=Some Trouble; 3=A Lot of Trouble)

Job-Hunting Factors	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Filling out applications	1.33	1.35	1.40	1.35
Interviewing for a job	1.39	1.48	1.44	1.52
Difficulty expressing myself well	1.55	1.54	1.67	1.63
Knowing how to dress	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.13
Presenting or "selling" myself to employers	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.72
Having no work experience	1.73	1.84	1.83	1.99
Having no skill(s)	1.67	1.81	1.80	1.90
Getting around (transportation)	1.49	1.58	1.52	1.53
Being a member of a minority group	1.53	1.71	1.65	1.63
Knowing where to get information on jobs	1.54	1.67	1.65	1.63
Not being old enough	1.74	1.70	1.71	1.77
Not knowing what a job is all about	1.52	1.66	1.55	1.71

In large measure VE and Non-VE students, male and female, showed very similar response profiles in Table 15. The same job-hunting problems affect all students in generally the same way. Some meaningful differences were seen in the degree to which these problem factors affected students by program and by sex. Having no work experience and having no skills show significant differences both by program and by sex. In both instances, VE male students showed greater confidence in their ability to overcome such problems than did other students; Non-VE female

students were the most doubting of their ability to overcome them. VE female students and Non-VE male students had strikingly similar in-between mean scores for these items. Non-VE students were somewhat more doubtful of their ability to express themselves well than VE students. Being a member of a minority group appeared to be a problem least for male VE students, most for their female VE peers. Males of both groups indicated significantly that they were less concerned with "knowing what a job is all about" than females.

Students were asked to classify as "very important," "somewhat important," and "not important at all" a list of topics having to do with careers, jobs, and the labor market. All of the topics presented to students, regardless of program or sex, were classified by them as "very important." Some were of even greater importance. That which was found by all students to occupy first priority was "to know how to get a job"; i.e., to know the mechanics of job-hunting. This response was somewhat misleading in light of responses shown in Table 15 where, in essence, the problems of job-hunting mechanics were spelled out as problem factors. The students seem to be saying, "Yes, we are aware of what the problems are in looking for a job and generally we feel that we can handle them, but we would like to be specifically prepared for the task so that we do not really have to think of these as problems at all." This will be validated subsequently when responses to a proposed in-school "job topics" course are analyzed. Also, given high priority among the topics covered were "where to look for a job" and "to know the type of education or training needed to get preferred jobs." Although still of great importance, that which appears to be given least priority was "to understand problems that others may have when job-seeking."

When compared by program alone, there were no significant differences between VE and Non-VE students in what they saw as job problems. When compared by program and sex a number of such differences surface. Females of both groups were

more concerned than males about knowing the educational/training requirements for jobs and about relating their school work to future jobs or careers. Male VE students were considerably less concerned than other students about knowing themselves and how they would fit into the career spectrum. They were also less concerned than others about knowledge of the career spectrum itself.

TABLE 16

VE and Non-VE Students' Views of the Helpfulness Afforded by Individuals in Discussions About World of Work While in School

(1=Very Helpful; 2=Helped a Little Bit; 3=No Help At All)

Individual	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Regular or academic school counselor	1.70	1.78	1.68	1.81
Vocational counselor	1.78	1.81	2.19	2.19
Regular teacher(s)	1.80	1.88	1.74	1.86
Vocational education teacher(s)	1.64	1.73	2.23	2.11
Adult friend(s)	1.68	1.73	1.64	1.63
School friend(s)	1.85	1.93	1.80	1.87
Parents	1.39	1.42	1.41	1.31
Brother, sister, other relatives	1.77	1.83	1.71	1.71
Non-school career counselor	1.81	1.83	1.81	1.77

Assuming that knowledge about careers and jobs is something in which students are interested, they were asked how helpful other people were in discussing such subjects with them while they were in school. Using scale values of 1 for "very helpful," 2 for "helped a little bit," and 3 for "did not help at all," mean scale values for nine such individuals were computed by program and sex. These are presented in Table 16. As can be seen in this table, parents were felt to be the most helpful in discussing job-related questions with all students. There is then a relatively similar pattern of responses for both groups and both sexes with understandably major differences regarding vocational counselors and vocational

education teachers. These vocationally associated persons would logically be closer to, and of benefit to, VE students and not general academic students; this is reflected in the mean score responses in the table.

Students were asked, "Do you feel topics dealing with jobs and careers should be discussed in a special course while you are still in high school?" The answer was a resounding "yes" (92 percent) for all students. If such a course were made available, would students be interested in participating in it? Once again, there was a very strongly positive answer (91.3 percent). There was virtually no difference by program or by sex in the very strong preference expressed for a course of this nature or in students' desires to take such a course.

School, Work, and After School Activities

A number of items in Form A/B tried to evaluate student orientations to vocational/technical education, extracurricular activities, and current work experience.

Most students, including those in vocational programs, felt that they knew about some, but not about all, of the vocational programs in their own school. As might be expected, VE students knew relatively more than Non-VE students. When asked if they would like to know more about any of the vocational programs in their school, the majority response was "no" (67.8 percent) with males more rejecting (72.4 percent) of the idea than females (64.6 percent). This negative response should not necessarily be interpreted as a lack of interest. The overwhelming majority of students in this sample, in their last years in high school, had already made a programmatic commitment and, right or wrong, would not be inclined to change at that late date. When asked if they might be interested in enrolling in vocational programs which were not currently offered at their schools, the modal response was again negative (73 percent), but Non-VE students were less negative in this respect than VE students. When asked which of such non-available

programs interested them, VE male students most frequently mentioned auto mechanics, data processing, and health occupation education; VE female students, interior decorating, pre-nursing, and data processing; Non-VE male students, electrical, radio and television broadcasting, and technology; Non-VE female students, interior decorating, health occupations, education, and pre-nursing.

Seven out of ten students indicated that their schools assisted them in job placement with no significant difference between VE and Non-VE students. When asked if there was a vocational counselor in their school, 43.9 percent of Non-VE students did not know and, surprisingly, 30.6 percent of VE students didn't know either.

TABLE 17

VE and Non-VE Students' Views of the Type Student Who Should Be in Vocational Education, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Type Student	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
	Male N=418	Female N=532	Male N=226	Female N=355
Has to make a living after graduation	66.5%	68.4%	68.6%	71.3%
Can't do well in an academic program	32.5%	33.1%	38.1%	34.7%
Very bright	28.7%	30.3%	25.2%	27.3%
Interested in real things, not just books	48.8%	53.4%	45.6%	45.4%
From minority group	39.5%	35.7%	33.2%	31.3%
Practical	25.4%	29.0%	28.3%	30.4%
Can't make it in college because he is poor	45.2%	53.6%	50.4%	54.9%
Doesn't really care about school	32.1%	27.4%	38.5%	29.9%

In an attempt to see if there were differences in the characterization of a "typical" student in vocational programs, eight different types of students were

portrayed and respondents were requested to identify all those for whom "vocational education programs are the best." Responses are summarized in Table 17. Except in two instances, the responses of all students were basically the same. There was complete agreement upon the fact that the type of student who best suits the vocational student image is the one who has to make a living when he graduates. This was closely followed, in order (except for VE male students who reverse the order), by the student who can't make it in college because he is poor and the student who is interested in real things, not just books. At least 45 percent of all students indicated that these three student types are those who best fit the vocational student image. Other student types show a sharp drop in responses, and, thus may be viewed as less important in this characterization. The two areas in which statistically significant differences appear between VE and Non-VE students concern the student interested in real things, not just books (more strongly advocated by VE students) and minority students (seen more within the vocational image by VE students, especially male). It should also be noted that male students, especially Non-VE male students, were more inclined than female students to portray the vocational student as one who doesn't really care about school.

Non-VE students more than VE students tended to participate in extracurricular activities while in high school. A greater proportion of VE students, especially male VE students (30 percent), have never participated in any school club, school or class activities. One-third of the Non-VE female students belonged, or had belonged, to at least three extracurricular activities (while only 13.5 percent of VE male students fell into this category). Females, in general, participated more frequently than males; Non-VE students more frequently than VE students.

Significantly more VE students (37.4 percent) than Non-VE students (19.5 percent) were employed outside of school at the time of this survey. There was

also a sharp sexual difference, with more males employed (35.3 percent) than females (27.4 percent). (In this respect the relative numbers of those employed were: VE male students, 39.9 percent; VE female students, 35.6 percent; Non-VE male students, 27.1 percent; and Non-VE female students, 14.7 percent.) It bears mention that it may not only be personal volition and economic necessity that places more VE students in the ranks of those employed. Economic necessity, to say the least, is a common characteristic of the overwhelming majority of all sampled students; it has been shown that they are largely from poor working-class families. Out-of-school placement may be easier for VE students as, in many cases, it is required of them as part of their vocational curriculum, and they are routinely placed in part-time jobs by their counselors and teachers. For males, out-of-school jobs were typically in laborer, operative, semi-skilled, and incipient craftsmen positions; for females, they were mostly in sales and clerical positions.

More than 70 percent of all students were assisted by others in getting their out-of-school jobs with decidedly more VE (73.7 percent) than Non-VE students (61.4 percent) having received such assistance. Principal sources of assistance for VE students were, in order, vocational education teachers, parents, and vocational counselors, and for Non-VE students, parents, friends at school, and adult friends. Academic teachers and regular counselors played little part in helping to place students. It is worthy to note that vocational counselors assisted 15.2 percent of the Non-VE students in getting jobs as well as 19.6 percent of the VE students, and that vocational teachers--who supposedly have little or no contact with academic students--helped place 7.1 percent of the Non-VE students.

Possible Factors in Migration

Students were placed in the hypothetical situation after graduation of looking for a job and were asked if they would, given this situation, move away from their home town to seek employment elsewhere. About half (48.8 percent) said that they would, and half (51.2 percent) said they would not. Fewer VE students (46.7 percent) than Non-VE students (52.3 percent) were willing to migrate; and fewer females (46 percent) than males (52.8 percent) were willing to migrate. Since it was assumed that the lack of economic opportunity has been a factor in migration, and that, in Texas, this factor has drawn young people out of rural areas, towns, and smaller cities to metropolitan areas, a special analysis was done comparing the students' desires to migrate from smaller versus larger cities (i.e., cities such as Marshall, Tyler, Waco, Beaumont, Port Arthur versus cities such as Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Galveston). This factor proved to be of major significance. Almost twice as many students from small cities (60.2 percent) than from larger cities (33.8 percent) were willing to migrate. A composite picture of the student in our sample who was inclined to move from his home city in search of a job would be that he was in a general academic program, male, and from a small city. (This type of student would probably encounter more difficulty in the school-to-work transition.)

After it had been verified that some would, and some would not, move from their home cities, students were asked to note any of nine reasons (ten for females) why they might consider migrating. This was expanded to include those students who indicated a non-preference for migration. They were asked, "For what reasons might you move in the future?" The list of reasons included factors that were not primarily economic as well as usual economic push factors. The reasons for out-migration and students' responses are given in Table 18. Immediately it is seen that the four major responses were basically economic:

lack of jobs in the home community (47.3 percent), insufficient pay for available jobs (42.5 percent), lack of job future in local community for those with only high school diplomas (36.3 percent), and lack of advancement in locally available jobs (28 percent). Although variations in responses could be seen by program and sex, only one factor emerged as truly significant--the fact that there were few jobs available. Here Non-VE students, mostly females, found this to be more of a push factor than VE students, and females generally emphasized this more than males. Though not statistically significant, differences were

TABLE 18

VE and Non-VE Students' Possible Reasons for Out-Migration, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

	VE Students		Non-VE Students	
Reasons for Out-Migration	Male N=418	Female N=532	Male N=226	Female N=355
No real future for high school graduate	30.1%	29.0%	31.9%	36.1%
Local jobs would not allow advancement	24.6%	22.9%	29.7%	22.3%
Very few jobs	35.7%	39.9%	38.1%	50.1%
Could not compete with those who work for less	14.8%	13.0%	12.4%	10.1%
Jobs do not pay enough	34.0%	35.0%	37.2%	42.3%
Does not like local people	6.5%	7.1%	6.2%	8.5%
Wants to get away from family	12.9%	14.9%	13.3%	14.7%
Too young to get tied down with another person	10.5%	12.8%	12.8%	10.1%
Wants to get away from friends	8.6%	7.9%	6.6%	6.8%
No chance for women in job market		18.2%		21.4%

noted among the other three major factors. The fact that local jobs did not pay enough was again more stressed by Non-VE female students, as was the

observation that there was no real future for high school graduates. Males more than females stressed the lack of advancement in local jobs.

Of special note was the fact that relative importance was attached to the lack of opportunity for women by females of both groups. Again, this appeared to be a somewhat more important factor for Non-VE female students than for VE female students.

Looking at the four major factors by large versus small cities, every one of them was statistically significant. Small city students saw less job future, less possibility of advancement, less availability of jobs, and less pay for available jobs, than did students of the larger cities. And, too, small city female students saw less chance for "a woman to get a good job" in their local communities than did female students from larger cities.

It is of interest to note that the number of reasons mentioned by students differs by program and sex. The average Non-VE female student checked 2.01 reasons for possible migration; Non-VE male students, 1.88 reasons; VE female students, 1.84 reasons; and VE male students, 1.77 reasons.

Who Gets the Jobs?

Do students see an ethnic bias in the labor market? As mentioned earlier in this report, minority status was not seen as an important problem facing them in job-hunting. Another series of items supported this rather optimistic view. Using four broad occupational categories--professional and technical, skilled and semi-skilled, clerical and sales, and unskilled--students were asked which of four ethnic groups (Anglos, Blacks, Mexican Americans, or Anyone) were more likely to get jobs in each category. As shown in Table 19, the modal reply for three of the occupational groups was Anyone: 51.5 percent for professional and technical; 55.9 percent for skilled and semi-skilled; and 57.5 percent for clerical and sales. Only in the lowest of the occupational categories did students

think that Blacks had an edge in securing jobs (46.3 percent) but, even here, Anyone was a close second (42.4 percent). In the three areas wherein the majority opinion was Anyone, it is interesting to note that Anglos ranked second

TABLE 19

VE and Non-VE Students' Views of the Ethnic Groups Most Likely to Get Jobs, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Category of Job and Ethnic Group	VE Students			Non-VE Students		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Professional-Technical						
Anglos	38.0%	37.5%	37.7%	36.2%	32.9%	34.4%
Blacks	15.5%	10.0%	12.3%	9.2%	9.2%	9.2%
Mexican Americans	1.7%	0.8%	1.2%	0.5%	1.2%	0.9%
Anyone	44.9%	51.8%	48.9%	54.1%	56.6%	55.6%
Total response	361	502	863	207	325	532
Semi-skilled-Skilled						
Anglos	9.6%	12.4%	11.3%	18.4%	12.5%	14.8%
Blacks	35.4%	29.7%	32.1%	24.2%	22.0%	22.8%
Mexican Americans	3.7%	2.6%	3.1%	1.9%	3.4%	2.8%
Anyone	51.3%	55.2%	53.6%	55.6%	62.2%	59.8%
Total response	353	498	851	207	328	535
Clerical-Sales						
Anglos	21.1%	22.8%	22.1%	27.6%	18.0%	21.7%
Blacks	18.0%	17.6%	17.8%	11.3%	13.1%	13.4%
Mexican Americans	4.3%	4.8%	4.7%	6.9%	4.3%	5.3%
Anyone	56.6%	54.7%	55.5%	54.2%	64.5%	60.6%
Total response	350	495	845	203	327	530
Unskilled						
Anglos	4.4%	3.2%	3.9%	4.5%	1.6%	2.7%
Blacks	40.1%	51.5%	46.7%	38.7%	50.3%	45.8%
Mexican Americans	8.7%	6.0%	7.1%	12.6%	7.0%	9.1%
Anyone	46.8%	39.3%	42.5%	44.2%	41.1%	42.3%
Total response	344	468	812	199	316	515

for professional level and clerical level jobs. The second choice for skilled jobs was Blacks. Mexican Americans ranked as last choice in all occupational categories. This minimizing of the job-seeking advantages of Mexican Americans

among Black students is not surprising. Six out of ten students in our sample were from small cities in East Texas where there are relatively few Mexican Americans and they do not constitute a strong or vocal minority community.

In general, females tended to be more optimistic than males about the ethnic employment picture, as are Non-VE students more than VE students.

Things Looked Forward To

Previous research has determined that high school age youth look forward to their future in terms of a number of distinct alternatives. Such alternatives may not be actually independent of one another, they may be overlapping or sequential, but they usually do not compete with one another at the same time nor with the same degree of importance. Students were asked to rank them in reference to one another from 1 as highest to 7 as lowest; i.e., only one alternative could be ranked first, only one second, etc. An average rank was computed for each alternative--the mean rank for all students for "to have lots of free time to do what I want" was 5.19; the actual range of ranks was from 1-7 but, as the average indicates, the bulk of these were towards the lower end of the scale. Mean ranks were then reordered from highest to lowest. The seven alternatives, their mean ranks, and their reordering (rank order) are shown in Table 20.

As can be seen under the columns "Rank Order" in Table 20, there is no difference at all among all four subgroups in the priority given to the seven alternatives. For all students first preference was given to obtaining all the education they desired, last to getting married and raising a family; the other alternatives ranked between these two extremes. Some indication of how definite the discrimination was between high- and low-rated alternatives was found in the range between lowest and highest mean ranks; i.e., between marriage and further education. In this regard, Non-VE female students appeared to

discriminate most with a discrimination index of 4.00 (5.81-1.81), while Non-VE male students discriminated least with a discrimination index of 3.36 (5.66-2.30).

TABLE 20

Mean Rank and Rank Order of Things Looked Forward To by VE and Non-VE Students, by Sex,

Things Looked Forward To	VE Students				Non-VE Students			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	Mean Rank	Rank Order	Mean Rank	Rank Order	Mean Rank	Rank Order	Mean Rank	Rank Order
To have lots of free time to do what I want	4.80	6	5.32	6	5.33	6	5.30	6
To get all the education I want	2.13	1	1.93	1	2.30	1	1.81	1
To earn as much money as I can	3.09	3	3.28	3	2.96	3	3.27	3
To get the job I want the most	2.74	2	2.56	2	2.53	2	2.49	2
To live in the kind of place I like best	4.12	4	4.35	4	4.24	4	4.32	4
To have the kind of house, car, etc., I want	4.36	5	4.81	5	4.59	5	4.89	5
To get married and raise a family	5.76	7	5.55	7	5.66	7	5.81	7

Tests of significance applied to the actual choice patterns by program and sex (not shown in Table 20) indicated that these patterns were basically the same regarding marriage and place to live, but were significantly different for the other five alternatives. VE male students tended to rank free time, making more money, and having material possessions higher than other students. Non-VE students were more emphatic in expressing their desire for more education than VE students. Non-VE male students more than others stressed the importance of getting a preferred job. In summary, VE male students were more strongly

oriented toward obvious and immediate future rewards than their female counterparts, and more than Non-VE students, male or female.

Special Items for VE Students

A portion of the A/B instrument, as noted earlier, was designed to elicit responses only from VE students. It will be recalled that the local population for this study was that of VE students and, as has been noted, there were twice as many of them as of Non-VE students in our sample. Because of this special focus, specific items in Form A/B were designed solely for VE students. The following section analyzes their responses.

TABLE 21

VE Students, by Sex, and by Vocational/Technical Program in Which Enrolled

USOE CODE	Program	Male		Female	
		No.	%	No.	%
01	Agriculture (vocational)	19	6.5%	0	0.0%
04	Distributive Education	18	6.1%	17	4.3%
07	Health Occupations	7	2.4%	66	16.6%
09	Home Economics (general)	17	5.8%	122	30.7%
14	Office Education	14	4.8%	74	18.6%
17	Trades and Industrial Occupations	178	60.8%	69	17.4%
--	Other	40	13.7%	49	12.3%
	Total	293	100.0%	397	100.0%

As can be seen in Table 21, the largest concentration of male students was in trades and industrial programs, mainly in auto mechanics and building trades. Relatively equal numbers were spread over agriculture, distributive education, and home economics (food trades). Almost one-third of the female students in the VE subsample were in home economics, with relatively large numbers following

in office education (vocational office education principally), trades and industrial occupations (mainly in cosmetology), and health occupations (mainly health occupations education and pre-nursing). The two specific programs providing at least 40 respondents in the survey were both overwhelmingly female: cosmetology and vocational office education.

More than half of the students will have completed one year in their vocational programs at the end of the 1973-1974 school year; about one-third were in their second year; approximately one in ten were in their third or fourth year.

Mentioned earlier in this report was the fact that about half of the VE students held out-of-school jobs. Students were asked if, in any way, their outside jobs were related to what they were studying in their vocational programs. About half (48 percent) of the working VE male students said that their jobs were related to their school programs, while two-thirds (66.2 percent) of the VE female students said that they were.

TABLE 22

Degree of Helpfulness Afforded by Individuals in Selecting a Vocational Education Program in High School for Male and Female VE Students

(1=Very Helpful; 2=Helped a Little Bit; 3=No Help At All)

Individual	Male	Female
Regular or academic school counselor	1.87	2.03
Vocational counselor	1.96	2.01
Regular teacher(s)	2.02	2.13
Vocational education teacher(s)	1.84	1.96
Adult friend(s)	1.97	2.12
School friend(s)	2.04	2.03
Parents	1.69	1.67
Brother or sister	2.15	2.17
Other relatives	2.11	2.22
Non-school career counselor	2.00	1.96

Several items for VE students were oriented to discover the process whereby students entered vocational/technical programs. The possible sources of personal influence were listed, and students were requested to indicate how helpful each may have been in helping them select their programs. With scale values of 1 for "very helpful," 2 for "helped a little bit," and 3 for "did not help at all," means were computed for sources as described for the similar arrangements in Tables 15 and 16. Response means for those who might have helped students in their selection of vocational programs are found in Table 22. The most important personal help for both males and females were given by their parents. All other persons, for both sexes, were close to either the positive or negative side of "helped a little bit." No category of source of help approached the "no help at all" pole. It can thus be summarized that, for both sexes, there were a variety of persons who assisted, but only parents stand out as being a decisive helping factor.

Students were asked how they learned about the vocational programs at their school. The primary source of information for females (43.8 percent) was friends at school; for males, it was almost equally teachers (35.7 percent) and friends at school (35.4 percent). For females, in order of their importance, other sources of information were: teachers (32 percent), academic counselors (29 percent), vocational counselors (25.4 percent), knowledge through personal reading (21.6 percent), parents who asked them to find out about programs (17.1 percent), graduates of their school (13.2 percent), and others (12.2 percent). For males, in order of their importance, other sources of information were: academic counselors (30.5 percent), vocational counselors (30.2 percent), personal reading (17.9 percent), parents (13.3 percent), graduates (11.9 percent), and others (9.6 percent).

TABLE 23

Reasons Why VE Students Enrolled in Vocational Programs, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

Reasons for Enrollment	Male N=418	Female N=532
I like it	46.2%	51.9%
My regular counselor told me to take it	7.2%	3.8%
My vocational counselor told me to take it	7.4%	4.5%
Teacher(s) told me to take it	7.4%	7.0%
Was the only one available	7.9%	3.6%
My parents told me to take it	7.2%	11.5%
I felt it might be helpful later on	48.8%	59.8%
Other reasons	2.9%	5.6%

After having requested information on who helped them in selecting their vocational programs and how they learned of the programs, students were asked why they selected such programs. Their responses are summarized in Table 23. Of seven possible reasons (with the exception of the residual other) five incorporate the idea that other persons--counselors, teachers, parents--or a situation which left no choice ("it was the only one available") pressured the student to take a vocational program. Two reasons incorporate the idea of personal desire, preference, or volition. As seen in Table 23, the most important reasons why students, male and female, took their current vocational programs was because they personally desired to do so; they liked the program and they thought it would be helpful to them later on. There is very little reason, in the great majority of cases, to suspect that they were "pushed" into vocational education.

Subsequently when students were directly asked if they liked their vocational program, about nine out of ten of the total VE sample said they did (88 percent of the males and 92.3 percent of the females). Further, when asked if

they sometimes felt like dropping out of their programs, 67.8 percent of the males and 66 percent of the females stated that they did not. From the responses given by the students, it can be summarized that a marked majority of students in vocational education programs are in such programs because they wish to be, that they intend to stay in their programs, and that they are satisfied with the programs as they are presently conducted.

Students were asked if they thought that the first job they might have after graduation would be related to their vocational program and if most of the jobs they might have in the future would be thus related. Their answers are given in Table 24. Significantly more females than males felt that both first job

TABLE 24

VE Students' Views of the Possible Relationship Between Current Program, First Job After Graduation, and Future Jobs, by Sex, in Percentages of Total Response

	First Job After Graduation		Future Jobs	
Possible Relationship	Male N=301	Female N=405	Male N=300	Female N=402
Yes, definitely	16.3%	26.2%	16.7%	24.9%
Yes, possibly	42.9%	42.2%	42.3%	39.8%
No, does not think so	20.6%	15.3%	19.0%	14.4%
Doesn't know	20.3%	16.3%	22.0%	40.9%

and future jobs would be related to their school programs. The modal responses for both males and females regarding first and future jobs was "yes, possibly." It is thus seen that a majority of students--59.2 percent of the males and 68.4 percent of the females--have a definite or possible association between their vocational curriculum and their first jobs. A majority of students, too, see such an association--59 percent of the males and 64.7 percent of the females--between their school program and their future jobs.

Summary

The Black Profile analyzed the results of responses to 1,531 in-school questionnaires from both VE and Non-VE students. Three-fourths of all students were from low income working-class homes, a considerable number from homes in which the principal wage earner is the mother.

For all students the post-high school alternative which elicits the most definite response is to find a steady job. For VE students this is followed by post-secondary vocational/technical training, and for Non-VE students, attending a four-year university or college. These three preferences--a job, post-secondary training, and university work--are the major alternatives upon graduation for all students: other alternatives are minor by comparison.

In general "ideal" vocations for all students would be in the professions or in highly technical jobs, jobs that pay well and that allow incumbents to help other people. Comparing "ideal" to "expected" jobs, sights are somewhat lowered but, in general, still tend to favor (especially for Non-VE students) higher status jobs.

Students generally indicated positive feelings towards their school and their educational programs and that they intended to graduate. Both VE and Non-VE students were particularly supportive of vocational education in the high schools and felt that most students should have some vocational preparation. All students dismissed traditional ideas about the role of women and saw females as a constant element in the present and future labor force. Students saw their parents as very supportive of their educational endeavors although parents were not often involved in school activities.

Both VE and Non-VE students saw little difficulty in problems which might beset them in looking for a job but, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly in favor of a course which would discuss such problems while they were in school.

VE students were not disparaged by either group who felt that the typical VE student was one who had to consider economic factors upon graduation.

About one-third of the VE students and one-fifth of the Non-VE students held out-of-school jobs at the time of this survey, mostly in semi-skilled, operative, and sales/clerical areas. Most were assisted by others in finding such jobs.

About half of all students would leave their home cities to find a job, citing economic factors as the prime reasons they would do so: this is much more a function of the availability of jobs in large cities and the non-availability of jobs in smaller cities than of anything else. Students generally see no ethnic bias in obtaining jobs although there is a tendency to view Anglo Americans as having an edge over minority people in getting the better jobs.

Further education is valued by all students when presented with a number of hypothetical future alternatives; least valued is getting married and raising a family.

Within the VE student subsample, all major program areas are represented. Most VE students who held out-of-school jobs indicated that they were related to their vocational programs. Most VE students also felt that their first job after graduation and the jobs they would hold in the future would definitely or possibly be related to their training in high school.

Parents appear to be the individuals who were most helpful in assisting VE students in selecting their programs but students very strongly indicated that they entered vocational training basically because they themselves wished to do so. They tended to learn about vocational programs from school friends. VE students generally expressed very positive support for their programs.

CHAPTER 3

BLACK GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS

One of the objectives of this study was to interview a small sample of Black high school graduates and school dropouts. They were asked many of the same questions to which the in-school students responded, and more importantly, they were asked to give their impressions and views of the high school program in which they had participated. Any work or training experiences that these ex-students had had since leaving school was documented. Graduates and dropouts also discussed their future job and educational aspirations.

Lists of graduates and dropouts were provided by school personnel in the majority of schools surveyed, and priority was placed on vocational education graduates. In a few instances students were interviewed in a group setting, but in most instances they were interviewed on a one-to-one basis by specially contracted and trained personnel familiar with their community.

The major thrust of this analysis was to profile the high school graduate and dropout and make comparisons where appropriate. Special emphasis was placed on their experiences since leaving school. Following up on graduates and dropouts is one of the best means of evaluating school programs from the student's point of view. Their responses to these questions provide school personnel with valuable feedback concerning the effectiveness and adequacy of educational structures, both vocational and non-vocational. This type of data is especially critical for those who are involved in the planning and developmental phases of vocational education.

Graduate, Dropout, and Parent Profile

There were a total of 145 Black graduates and 136 Black dropouts responding to the Graduate (C)/Dropout (D) questionnaires. Table 1 indicates that slightly over 20 percent of both groups came from Houston, with the remainder of the respondents coming equally from San Antonio, Marshall, Tyler, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Galveston.

TABLE 1

Residence of Graduates and Dropouts Interviewed, in Percentage

City	Graduates N = 145	Dropouts N = 136
Houston	22.7%	21.5%
San Antonio	13.8%	14.8%
Beaumont	2.8%	0.0%
Marshall	6.9%	7.5%
Tyler	13.1%	14.8%
Dallas	16.6%	13.3%
Fort Worth	13.8%	14.8%
Galveston	10.3%	12.6%

The median age of the graduates was slightly higher (19 years) than that of the dropouts (18 years), and over half of both groups was between 18 and 21 years old. About one-third of the graduates and one-half of the dropouts were female. Over 60 percent of both samples left school in 1972 or 1973. About 75 percent of both groups was single, 23 percent married, and the remaining two percent reported they were separated or divorced.

The parents of the respondents were primarily from Texas, with about one-fifth reporting their parents' birthplaces as another state. As might be expected, very few parents were born outside the United States. Also, nearly 90 percent of both groups reported that they were born in Texas.

The distribution of parents' education for the two groups showed differences in the expected directions. One-fourth of fathers of both groups had eight years of school or less, one-sixth reported some high school, and one-fifth had completed high school. Twice as many graduates reported their fathers as having had some form of post-high school training (24.5 percent) as did the dropouts (12.9 percent). Only 11.2 percent of the graduates did not know their father's educational level, while 22.7 percent of the dropouts did not know.

The differences were somewhat more pronounced for the mother's education. Some 11.9 percent of the graduates responded that their mothers had completed eight years of school or less, while 18.9 percent of the dropouts reported this. There was no difference between the groups concerning the mothers who graduated from high school. One-fourth of the graduates' mothers had received some post-high school training, while only one-sixth of the dropouts mentioned this training.

Three-fourths of the respondents reported either their father (48.2 percent of the graduates and 41.9 percent of the dropouts) or mother (24.8 percent of the graduates and 26.4 percent of the dropouts) as the principal wage earner. Only 12.4 percent of the graduates and 15.5 percent of the dropouts mentioned a spouse as the principal wage earner. It appears that the vast majority of both groups still live at home.

Further analysis of the family structure indicates that slightly more graduates (53.8 percent) than dropouts (43.0 percent) reported their father at home. As was the case with the vocational and non-vocational samples, relatively more respondents indicated their mother was present (73.1 percent of the graduates and 70.2 percent of the dropouts). A majority of both groups indicated brothers and/or sisters present, with the average mean number of siblings for all groups being slightly over one. A few more dropouts than graduates mentioned grandparents (7.6 percent of the graduates and 9.7 percent of the dropouts) or other relatives living with them (9.0 percent for graduates and 12.7 percent for dropouts). Less than one-fifth of either group mentioned a spouse living with them, although 24.1 percent of the graduates and 28.4 percent of the dropouts mentioned children. Dropouts tended to have slightly more children than graduates (1.2 for graduates, 1.4 for dropouts).

When asked to report the total income for their family, graduates noted a higher median income than dropouts. The median family income for graduates was reported as $150 per week and $139 per week for the dropouts.

An overwhelming number of respondents (95 percent) had spent most of their lives in Texas cities. As might be expected, this time was spent in the cities in which the respondents presently reside.

Post-High School Experiences

One of the best ways to ascertain differences between graduates and dropouts is to compare their labor force participation and educational and training experiences since leaving school. The graduates and dropouts sampled in this study were asked to describe the kinds of things that they had done either after graduation or after dropping out of school. In looking

at these responses, it should be kept in mind that nearly 60 percent of the interviewees had left school either in 1972 or 1973.

TABLE 2

Post-High School Experiences
of Graduates and Dropouts

Experiences Since High School	Graduates N = 145		Dropouts N = 136	
	% of Total	Rank Order	% of Total	Rank Order
Worked	83.0%	1	54.2%	1
VE training	39.3%	2	21.0%	2
Attended college	32.2%	3	3.0%	5
Other training programs	18.3%	4	11.4%	3
Military	6.3%	5	5.4%	4
Business for yourself	3.6%	6	2.3%	6
Union apprenticeship	2.1%	7	2.3%	6

Graduates and dropouts responded to a series of detailed questions concerning their post-high school job history, training, and educational experiences. Table 2 illustrates the positive effects of a high school diploma on the employment, training, and educational patterns of those persons who completed high school. Although both groups indicated that they had worked since leaving high school, a significantly larger percentage of graduates (83.0 percent) reported some type of employment than did dropouts (54.2 percent). This factor alone graphically illustrates the difficulty that high school dropouts have in obtaining employment. Dropouts are more likely not to have a skill of any kind and are prone to have more job related problems than graduates.

Following the same pattern, graduates have participated in more post-high school skills training activities (39.3 percent) than dropouts (21.0 percent) and only 3.0 percent of the dropouts had attended college while nearly a third of the graduates had done so. When asked if they had participated in other programs such as government sponsored or on-the-job training programs, slightly more graduates indicated that they had done this. The other alternatives listed--entering the military, going into business for themselves, and joining a union apprenticeship program--were rarely mentioned by either graduates or dropouts. Union apprenticeship programs, as indicated in the responses given by Black high school students are seen as remote opportunities for Black youth. Lack of information about such programs and the difficulty encountered in joining them preclude most young people from participating in them.

Following these general questions concerning post-high school experiences, the respondents were asked to report their job history. Graduates and dropouts reported on the specific jobs held, hourly wage, number of months worked, the person or agency that assisted him/her in obtaining that job. In analyzing this information, it must be kept in mind that the majority of the respondents are recent entrants into the labor market having been out of school less than two years.

Of the 119 graduates and 70 dropouts who described their most recent job, it was found that both the quantity and the quality of the graduates' jobs were higher than those reported by the dropouts. Although both groups had left school recently, the mean number of jobs mentioned by graduates was 1.8 as compared to 1.0 for dropouts. In looking at the type of first job held by both groups, the graduates held higher level jobs than dropouts: they

reported having jobs in the unskilled (25 percent), technical (25 percent) and clerical occupations (30 percent). Dropouts, on the other hand, were heavily concentrated in the unskilled category (60 percent) with technical classifications accounting for 19 percent and clerical occupations accounting for only 11 percent of the jobs held by dropouts. Union participation was reported by less than 10 percent of both groups. Not enough information was available for jobs beyond the first one mentioned to discuss their characteristics in detail. This was due in part to the fact that the majority of the respondents had been in the job market only a short while.

Graduates reported only a slightly higher mean wage than did the dropouts. Graduates averaged $2.31 per hour compared to $2.18 per hour for the dropouts. This slight differential in wages between the two groups is probably the result of the respondent's recent entry into the labor market. Initially, most are paid the minimum federal wage. However, in a longitudinal study, the differential between the wages of graduates and dropouts would probably be much higher in favor of the graduates. The time worked was about the same for both groups--14.4 months for the graduates and 13.7 months for the dropouts.

In seeking and obtaining employment, about one-fourth of both groups indicated that they found the jobs themselves, while nearly 20 percent reported their friends as being helpful. As for school sources, relatively more graduates mentioned VE counselors (14 percent) than did dropouts (6 percent), and only graduates mentioned that VE teachers were helpful to them in getting a job. The Texas Employment Commission was mentioned by 14 percent of the dropouts and 11 percent of the graduates.

Several questions inquired into the unemployment history of the respondents. About half of each group mentioned that they had been unemployed at some time since leaving school. The median period of unemployment for graduates was five months, and for the dropouts it was six months. It is interesting to note that fewer graduates (15 percent) reported being unemployed for over a year than did dropouts (25 percent). Of those graduates who reported being unemployed, three-fourths sought assistance through the Texas Employment Commission while three-fifths of the dropouts contacted this agency.

Ideal and Expected Jobs

The respondents were asked a series of questions concerning their ideal job, reasons why they wanted this type of job, and the type of job they really expected to have. These items were identical to those given to the in-school students. First, the graduates and dropouts were asked: "If you were completely free to choose any job, what would you most desire as a lifetime kind of work?"

In response to this question, both groups expressed similar aspirations. Professional and technical jobs were most frequently mentioned, skilled craft jobs were their second choice, and clerical and secretarial positions were the third most frequently mentioned ideal jobs. Taken together, these ideal jobs represent over 70 percent of the total responses for both groups.

The two groups were then asked to check any of ten reasons, plus an "other" category, why they chose those ideal jobs.* The graduates most frequently mentioned "I can help other people" while the dropouts most

*The reasons included in the question were: this is an important job, it pays good money, other people will look up to me, it matches my abilities, I can be my own boss, I know a lot about it, it offers security, my parents want me to, it is exciting work, I can help other people, and other reasons.

frequently mentioned that the ideal job they wanted "matched their abilities." The second most frequently mentioned reason by both groups was "it pays good money." Other reasons mentioned by both groups were "it is exciting work," "this is an important job," and "it offers security." Thus, in selecting their ideal job, both groups used a combination of pragmatism and idealism.

After answering the previous two questions, both samples were asked about their expectations: "Sometimes we are not always able to do what we want most. What kind of job do you really expect to have most of your life?"

Both the graduates and the dropouts tended to lower their aspirations when asked about expected jobs. In the case of the graduates, it was more a matter of intensity of choice; i.e., they still mentioned professional-technical jobs as their first preference but relatively fewer checked this category while more checked clerical-technical positions.

The most frequently expected jobs for the dropouts were skilled craft jobs, with technical and professional jobs going to second place. In addition, semiskilled jobs were their third most frequently mentioned expected job, displacing clerical and secretarial jobs which went to fourth place. Thus, in selecting their expected lifetime jobs, both groups appeared to have lowered their occupational aspirations, with dropouts more so than graduates exhibiting this characteristic. Perhaps the dropouts' realization that their lack of education, and in many cases skills training, preempted them from attaining higher employment goals and resulted in their being somewhat more realistic about their future jobs.

Potential Migration

Graduates and dropouts were given three questions which inquired into their degree of willingness to move away from their home city. First, they were asked "Regardless of what your specific plans may be, let's imagine

that you would be looking for a job. Would you move away from your home town to look for a job somewhere else?" Graduates (54.6 percent) more so than dropouts (44.1 percent) indicated that they would relocate to look for a job. The second item was a multiple response question to determine the reasons why such persons would move away from their present place of residence. (All respondents were asked to answer this question, even if they did not plan to move at the present time). Table 3 lists the reasons checked by graduates and dropouts for moving now or in the future.

TABLE 3

Reasons Given by Graduates and Dropouts for Migrating

Reason	Graduates N = 145		Dropouts N = 136	
	% of Total	Rank Order	% of Total	Rank Order
Jobs don't pay enough	46.8%	1	32.5%	2
Too few jobs here	40.4%	2	36.7%	1
No job advancement	29.1%	3	24.2%	3
No job future	24.8%	4	24.2%	3
Want to get away from family	14.9%	5	15.0%	5
Not compete with those who would work for less	10.6%	6	10.8%	6
Too involved with someone	5.7%	7	10.8%	6
Get away from my friends	5.7%	7	5.8%	8
No chance for woman to get a good job here	5.0%	8	16.7%	4
Don't like people around here	2.8%	9	6.7%	7

The four major reasons given by graduates for moving in order of preference were: (1) jobs don't pay enough, (2) too few jobs around here, (3) no job advancement possibilities, and (4) no job future. Dropouts felt that (1) there are too few jobs, (2) jobs don't pay enough, (3) no job advancement possibilities and (4) no job future. Relatively few graduates and dropouts mentioned that: they wanted to get away from their families or friends, that they could not compete with others who would work for less, that they were too involved with someone else, or that they didn't like the people there. It is of interest to note that 16.7 percent of the dropouts felt that "there was no chance for a woman to get a job around here," while only 5.0 percent of the graduates checked this category. This could be that the female graduates had acquired some type of skill and were better able to find jobs than were female dropouts with no skills. In general, both groups felt that low pay, no job availability, and low quality of available jobs were the major reasons which would prompt them to move.

After determining reasons for moving from their home city, respondents, in an open-ended question, listed specific places where they would like to move. The majority of graduates (47.5 percent) and dropouts (56.1 percent) mentioned some city in Texas. The three most frequently mentioned cities were Dallas, Houston, or Fort Worth which ironically contain two-thirds of the State's Black population. California (mostly Los Angeles), Chicago, and New York constituted the bulk of the remaining locations. Thus, at least for this sample, the major thrust of migration in Texas continues to be toward the larger urban areas.

Future Goals

As in the case of in-school students, this study was interested in ascertaining future goals, aspirations, and other general things that graduates and dropouts might be interested in pursuing. Both groups were given a list of seven alternatives that young people generally look forward to doing. They were instructed to rank order the alternatives in terms of their importance. Another question inquired into the interest which graduates and dropouts exhibited toward additional training and/or education.

TABLE 4

Graduates' and Dropouts' Goals for the Future

Goal	Graduates N = 145		Dropouts N = 136	
	Mean Rank	Rank Order	Mean Rank	Rank Order
Get job I want most	2.3	1	2.8	1
Get all education I want	2.4	2	3.0	2
Earn as much money as I can	3.1	3	3.1	3
Live in kind of place I like best	4.3	4	4.1	4
Have most acquisitions I want	4.6	5	4.3	5
Get married and raise family	5.4	6	5.1	7
Have lots of free time	5.7	7	5.1	6

Table 4 illustrates the pattern of responses given by graduates and dropouts to the first question. The ranking for both groups was nearly identical with the exception of the last two items. They were interested in (1) getting the job I like the most, (2) getting all the education I want, (3) earning as much money as I can, and (4) living in the kind of place I

like best. As a group, they were less interested in having material things, getting married and raising a family, and lastly having lots of free time.

Graduates and dropouts were then asked directly if they were interested in additional education or training, and if so what type of education or training they were interested in obtaining. Not surprisingly, about nine out of ten respondents in both groups indicated a preference for additional education and/or training. The graduates favored college training (53.2 percent) although a large percentage also mentioned VE or on-the-job training (34.7 percent). More than 46 percent of the dropouts were interested in VE or on-the job training while nearly a third indicated an interest in careers that required college training.

It is apparent that these young Black persons are serious about their desires for attaining additional training and/or education. Community colleges especially should make strong efforts to recruit this type of person and offer the kind of occupational training programs that appeal to him. Such programs, however, should reflect the available job opportunities in the community. Black youth, even those that have dropped out of school, have not lost their ambition for increasing their social mobility through additional education.

Attitudes Toward Vocational Education

Three-fourths of the graduates and about one-half of the dropouts interviewed reported taking vocational education while in high school. Those that participated in VE were aksed a series of questions concerning their experiences in and attitudes toward VE. Most of the VE participants seemed to have very favorable impressions toward their occupational training.

The majority of the respondents had taken VE for one or two years and indicated that if they were back in school they would take the same program. Most took VE because they felt it might be helpful later in the future and because they liked it. This parallels the responses given by the in-school VE students interviewed in this study. Graduates and dropouts also indicated that parents and school counselors were relatively more helpful than teachers, friends or other relatives in their decision to enroll in VE programs in high school.

Two-thirds of the graduates and half of the dropouts reported liking their high school VE program very much. Less than three percent of the graduates reported not liking their VE program while about 16 percent of the dropouts expressed negative feelings. The general feelings of the graduates toward their VE programs were positive, and many of them felt that their first job had been related to their VE training. The dropouts, however, were somewhat more skeptical, with fewer mentioning being able to use their VE training. Despite these reservations on the part of the dropouts, both groups felt strongly that VE programs prepared a student for the world of work.

It is interesting to note that two-thirds of the dropouts had failings in VE, while only one-third of the graduates reported this. Also, the graduates had participated in all forms of extracurricular high school activities to a greater extent than the dropouts.

When asked if their high school provided a placement program, more graduates reported such a program than did dropouts, and fewer graduates reported not knowing whether such a program existed.

All graduates and dropouts were asked to check the characteristics they felt described the typical vocational education student. The list provided

them was identical that given to students and other persons interviewed. The purpose of this question was to give an indication of how different persons perceived the "typical VE student." Table 5 details the responses given by the graduates and dropouts.

TABLE 5

Graduates' and Dropouts' Views of the Traits of the Typical VE Student

Characteristics	Graduates N = 145		Dropouts N = 136	
	% of Total	Rank Order	% of Total	Rank Order
Student who has to make a living	75.0%	1	73.3%	1
Student interested in real things	60.7%	2	58.0%	3
Student who can't make it in college because he is poor	53.6%	3	62.6%	2
Student who can't do well academically	47.9%	4	40.5%	5
Practical student	42.9%	5	31.3%	7
Student from minority group	37.1%	6	43.5%	4
Student who doesn't care about school	35.0%	7	34.4%	6
Student who is very bright	21.4%	8	23.7%	8

Both groups felt that the VE student is one who has to make a living, one who is interested in real things, and a student who can't make it in college because he is poor. More graduates than dropouts felt that the VE student is one who cannot do well academically. More dropouts viewed the VE student as one coming from a minority group, while only about a third of both groups felt that VE is for the student who doesn't care about school. Also, only one out of five felt that VE was for the student who was very

bright. The Black in-school students agreed with this group's perception of the VE students: that he was one who had to make a living, was interested in real things, and couldn't make it in college because he was poor. They also felt that the bright student was not one who should be in VE programs.

Job Problems

Many students who leave school do not realize the job problems they will encounter upon entering the labor market. For some students these problems may be severe; for others they may not be. However, it is certain that all students who leave school will encounter problems to some degree. In-school students have a tendency to minimize job problems, but employers and school personnel are quick to take note of them. These problems range from not knowing how to complete job applications accurately to not knowing where to find assistance when looking for a job. Just as important are problems that the young person runs into once he/she gets a job. This section explores the observations of graduates and dropouts concerning the type and intensity of difficulty they have had in their initial entrance into the working world.

Since the graduates and dropouts had recently entered the job market, it was felt that they might have experienced problems concerning interviewing and job preparation. The response categories ranged from no trouble at all (Value = 1) to a lot of trouble (Value = 3). When the mean response was between 1 and 1.5, it was assumed that little, if any, problem existed. When the group mean was between 1.5 and 2.5 some trouble was felt, and if it was reported as greater than 2.5, a lot of trouble was felt. Table 6 details these responses.

TABLE 6

Graduates' and Dropouts' Mean Responses to Potential Job Problems

Problem	Graduates	Dropouts
Filling out applications	1.17	1.39
Interviewing for a job	1.34	1.59
Difficulty in expressing myself well	1.44	1.69
Knowing how to dress	1.15	1.24
"Selling" myself to employers	1.53	1.76
Having no work experience	1.88	1.94
Having no skill	1.82	1.97
Transportation	1.77	1.86
Member of a minority group	1.79	1.72
Knowing where to get information	1.71	1.76
Not being old enough	1.59	1.72
Not knowing what a job is about	1.54	1.70

It is interesting to note that no items had a mean response of over 2.0, but some items were more troublesome than others. Both groups seemed to experience relatively little difficulty in filling out applications and knowing how to dress. The dropouts seemed to experience more difficulties in interviewing for a job, in expressing themselves well, and in "selling" themselves to employers. Having no work experience was the major problem for both groups, although it was slightly more of a problem for dropouts. Transportation, being a member of a minority group, and knowing where to get information presented both groups with some difficulty. Dropouts seemed

to be more aware of transportation problems, but perceived being Black less of a problem than graduates. Also, age and lack of knowledge about jobs seemed more pronounced among dropouts.

Black in-school students interviewed had many of these same problems. Although no single item had a mean response of over 2.0, the in-school students seemed to indicate that these problems were not as intense. Having no skills and work experience were the two major problems expressed by in-school students. When comparing dropouts and VE in-school students, dropouts indicated that they had more difficulty with these job related problems. In comparing dropouts to graduates, dropouts again generally experienced more intense job related problems.

Graduates and dropouts responded to an item concerning the degree of assistance they had received from other persons in looking for a job. School counselors, teachers, friends, parents, and out-of-school persons all felt within the "somewhat helpful" category for both groups. However, graduates and dropouts indicated that adult friends, school friends, and parents were relatively more helpful than other groups.

An overwhelming number of graduates and dropouts felt that a course dealing with careers, jobs, and job problems should have been available when they were still in school. Nine out of ten dropouts and graduates indicated that such a course would have been helpful, and a similar number said that they would have participated in a career type program if it had been available during their school years. Other in-school students in this and other studies conducted by the Center have strongly expressed a need for such a course while they are still in school.

In order to determine what the ethnicity of persons holding professional, skilled, clerical, and unskilled jobs were likely to be in their community, the respondents were asked to check Anglo, Blacks, Mexican Americans, or anyone for each of the four major types of jobs. Most felt these occupations could be filled by anyone. However, of those who selected a particular group, Anglos were felt to be found in professional and clerical positions, while Anglos and Blacks were mentioned as skilled workers, and more Blacks were seen as holding unskilled jobs. These observations were parallel for both graduates and dropouts.

Attitude Questions Toward School, Home, Family, and Work

As in the in-school questionnaire, graduates and dropouts were presented with 24 items concerning attitudes toward home, school, the family, and work. The responses formed a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The graduates and dropouts expressed similar responses on all but five of the items.

Overall, both groups agreed with statements concerning the importance of their family, future success and planning, and positive comments about education. They were optimistic about their potential success, and they felt work was something that they liked as well as being a vehicle to "get ahead."

The two groups differed on their feelings about the definition of success. The graduates did not feel "success means making a lot of money" while the dropouts did. Also, the graduates agreed strongly (the dropouts agreed, but to a lesser extent) that "success means being satisfied with what you are doing."

Both groups stated they liked school very much, but the dropouts to a slightly lesser degree. They felt all students should take some VE, that VE helped a student learn a skill, and it was helpful in getting a job. Neither group felt VE was the only thing a student from a poor family should do. The graduates felt more strongly than the dropouts that VE in high school is generally a good idea. Finally, the graduates did not feel that VE is a way of getting out of uninteresting courses, while the dropouts did. This is not surprising, since many dropouts felt academic courses were dull and not directly related to their needs.

Although both groups felt girls should be encouraged to work, the graduates did not feel that high school was enough for girls, while the dropouts felt less strongly about this. Also, in response to a question concerning the role of women, more dropouts than graduates felt that women should be housewives or work only part-time. Further, the dropouts responded with relatively less frequency than the graduates to the notion that a woman should work full-time and share the housework.

Parents

A series of questions was asked relating to the parents of the graduates and dropouts interviewed by this study. These questions delved into the attitudes and involvement of parents in their children's educational process. It must be kept in mind that these responses reflect the thinking of parents who have low incomes, low educational levels, and in many cases hold two jobs in order to be able to provide for their families.

Although parents of VE students generally support these programs,* nearly three-fourths of the graduates reported that their parents encouraged

*As indicated in Chapter 4.

them to prepare for college rather than for a job. This again is a reflection of the "everyone must go to college" and "my child should get more education than I did" syndromes still prevalent in American society. On the other hand, only half of the dropouts reported that their parents encouraged college preparation over job preparation. The parents of both groups encouraged their children to stay in school, although the graduates' parents were slightly more emphatic about this. About one out of four respondents in both groups indicated that their parents knew "a lot about school." More graduates (86.8 percent) than dropouts (72.4 percent) reported that their parents talked to them about their school work. Less than half of the graduates indicated that their parents helped them with their school work or were active in school activities, while slightly more than a third of the dropouts reported this. However, according to the graduates two out of three of their parents belonged to the P.T.A. while one out of two dropouts' parents belonged to this organization. Given the low participation levels of most low income families, this response might be somewhat exaggerated.

Generally, the graduates' parents appeared to support their children both passively (through encouragement and interest in their school work) and actively (through organizational involvement and direct help). The parents of the dropouts, however, seemed less involved and less active in their children's school experiences.

Questions Relating to School Dropouts

In addition to responding to all of the previous questions, the dropouts interviewed were asked to answer a set of special items concerning their reasons for leaving school and other related items. A total of 136 dropouts responded to these questions.

Most of those interviewed indicated that they left school between the ages of 16 and 18. Less than ten percent of the sample left school prior to the tenth grade. The majority of the students left school either during the tenth grade (31.3 percent) or the eleventh grade (33.6 percent). About 25 percent of the students said they left school during their senior year. This information reinforces the notion that if anything is going to be done about the "dropout" or "pushout" problem, it must be done on a continuing basis through the middle grades and high school years.

Those students who left school gave several reasons for doing so. Table 7 indicates that having to work and dislike of school were the two major contributing factors. Some students said that they left school because they wanted to get married or felt that school had nothing to offer them. None left because their parents told them to quit, and only a few said they dropped out because a teacher or counselor told them to quit. Generally, economic necessity and the failure of the schools to motivate the student adequately prompted these persons to leave school before graduation.

TABLE 7

Dropouts' Reasons for Leaving School
In Percentages of Total Response
(N = 136)

Reasons	% Responding
Had to work	28.4%
Didn't like school	26.1%
Wanted to get married	15.7%
School had nothing to offer me	12.7%
Lot of friends quit	6.0%
Teacher or counselor told me to quit	3.0%
Parents told me to quit	0.0%

About half of the dropouts responded to questions concerning conditions under which they could return to school. Most said that they would return if school had something to offer them or if a VE course they were interested in was available. A few said that they could not return or that they needed additional information about school.

It is interesting to note that over half of the dropouts reported participation in a course to obtain a high school diploma. This high percentage is probably a result of interviewing bias--part of the sample came from federal programs designed to assist dropouts. Even so, many of those who had not enrolled in such programs seemed interested in them. This probably reflects the dropout's perception of reality: he now realizes that his lack of education, and in most cases his lack of a skill, makes it extremely difficult to acquire the kind of job that he desires or that will provide him/her with a secure, stable, and financially rewarding job.

Summary

In comparing the Black graduates and the dropouts, there appeared to be significant differences between the two groups. More graduates than dropouts had worked since leaving school. Graduates had better skills, better jobs, and more post-high school training experiences; had made slightly more money; and has less intense job related problems. Graduates appeared to be more mobile than dropouts, but both groups indicated a desire to relocate to the larger urban areas in Texas; mainly Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth.

Both graduates and dropouts still had relatively high career goals and expressed positive feelings toward further education. They were primarily interested in getting the job they desired, obtaining all the education they could, and in earning as much money as they could. Graduates and dropouts

were interested in additional training and education. Graduates were more oriented toward a college education, and dropouts toward VE training.

Those respondents who took VE in high school were generally favorable towards the program; however, more graduates felt that VE was related to their first job. Graduates were more active in school activities and had fewer job related problems. Both groups felt that there was a need for a job orientation course at the high school level and indicated they would have participated in one if it had been available. Although the parents of both groups encouraged their children to stay in school, graduates appeared to have received more parental support and their parents were more active 'n school activities.

The dropouts interviewed reported they dropped out of school mostly during the eleventh and twelfth grades because they had to work and disliked school. However, they expressed an interest in returning to school and finishing high school or obtaining skills training. Although there are several government programs which assist dropouts, community colleges and other educational agencies must make some attempt to upgrade the basic educational and training skills of these individuals.

CHAPTER 4

PARENTS AND SCHOOL

A small sample of Black parents whose children were in high school vocational programs was interviewed by project staff. The names of these parents were provided by vocational education personnel in the schools surveyed by this study. The brief questionnaire administered to the parents inquired into several aspects of parental involvement in the school and toward school related activities. As in the previous survey conducted by the Center for Human Resources with Mexican American parents, field interviewers were well received by the parents. They cooperated fully and enthusiastically.

The parent questionnaire elicited responses about the parents' views toward vocational education programs, the high school in general, their children's future, and other topics concerning their child and his education. The Black parents, much like the Mexican American parents, were characterized by low economic backgrounds and did not participate much in their child's school activities. However, as evidenced by responses given here by Black parents, they maintain a keen interest in their child's welfare, providing much encouragement and moral support. Black parents continue to view education as a stepping stone to a better life for themselves and their children, and any effort made by the schools to improve that educational environment would be wholeheartedly endorsed by them.

Parent Profile

A total of 82 Black parents whose children were in vocational education were interviewed in this study. Nearly three-fourths of those interviewed

were mothers. Their child had been in a VE program for slightly more than one year, and almost all of the students were in the 11th (51.0 percent) or the 12th grade (45.5 percent). The parents interviewed had more than four children in the family, with the mean ages ranging from 11.5 years for the youngest to 20.8 years for the oldest. Each family interviewed had nearly three children enrolled in school at the present and at least two had graduated from high school. Only eleven parents indicated that one or more of their children had dropped out of school.

Most of the parents interviewed had been born in Texas (90 percent of the mothers and 80 percent of the fathers). The mean age for the fathers was 46.6 years compared to 42.7 years for the mothers. Mothers had a higher educational attainment--11.8 years of schooling--than did the fathers, with 10.8 years of schooling. About one-fourth of both parents had engaged in some type of VE training, and very few of the fathers were union members.

Using Hollingshead's two factor index for social position* based on education and occupation, a large portion of the Black parents (70 percent) fell in categories IV and V. None were classified in category I, and the remaining third were collapsed in categories II and III. This means that most of the parents have jobs which are skewed toward the lower occupational rungs--unskilled and semiskilled, with very few professional and technical jobs found in this sample. Total family income was reported at around $227 per week. The families interviewed reported that in a majority of the cases, the fathers were working to support the family (55) while 39 of the mothers said that they were currently employed.

*See Chapter 2 for a description of this social class index.

Attitude Toward School and School Activities

Black parents, much like the Mexican American parents interviewed in the previous study, overwhelmingly endorsed their child's VE program. When asked the question, "Do you like your child's program in school?" 98 percent of the parents responded affirmatively. Given the economic status of many Black families, perhaps they feel that through VE training a student could earn money sooner and help out at home. This is especially true with students who participate in work-study programs; the student is earning some money while he is still in school.

Parents were given a series of items inquiring into their attitudes and activities concerning their child's school experiences. (See Table 1.) All the parents indicated that they encouraged their son/daughter to stay in school, all agreed that education was good for their child and that they were interested in their school work. More than nine out of ten parents also reported that they discussed with the student work related to school. However, when asked if they knew much about school, nearly one-third of the parents said they did not. When asked about active participation; i.e., "Do you visit your school and teacher regularly?" only one-third of the parents responded affirmatively. Also, only about one out of two parents assisted their child with school work while six out of ten indicated that they belonged to the P.T.A. or other school organizations. Although many of the parents were not actively involved in their children's school activities, three-fourths of the parents reported that they would like to be more involved in them.

Black parents seemed to be saying that despite not being active participants in school activities, they were interested in their children's education

process. Schools should take a more aggressive role in luring parents into the school building, and once there, teachers, counselors, and administrative personnel should make them feel welcome. As indicated previously, Black parents remain extremely supportive of their children's educational experiences, be it a vocational or an academic program. Economic conditions, lack of time, and conflicts in time schedules, however, preclude many Black parents from participating as actively as they would like to in school activities.

Parents were asked to respond to a variety of questions pertaining to cultural factors, societal values, family values, the role of the high school, and other related questions. The responses to these statements were to be answered on an "agree"/"disagree" continuum. Table 2 gives the percentage of response for each statement.

Black parents strongly agreed that a child's family is very important to him, that it is important that children plan for their futures, and that education is the best way for children to get ahead in life. They also agreed that it was more important for their children to go to school now rather than to work and that it was important that they get ahead in life. Black parents, much like Mexican American parents, believe vehemently that education is the key to economic progress, and they are willing to sacrifice themselves to provide as much education for their children as possible.

Most parents were fairly optimistic about their children's chances of "making it in life" and of getting a good job. They believed, however, that young people should think about what they want to do in life and do it. Parents viewed work as something everyone has to do and as the only way to get ahead, but they felt that this was not the young person's favorite pastime. Black parents characterized success as being satisfied and happy with what

TABLE 1

Degree of Parental Involvement in School Activities

Question	Number	Percent
Do you encourage your child to stay in school?		
Yes	80	100.0
No	0	
Total	80	
Do you think education is good for your child?		
Yes	82	100.0
No	0	
Total	82	
Do you like your child's vocational education program?		
Yes	79	97.6
No	2	2.4
Total	81	100.0
Are you very interested in your child's school work?		
Yes	81	100.0
No	0	
Total	81	
Do you know much about school?		
Yes	52	67.6
No	25	32.4
Total	77	100.0
Do you visit your child's school and teacher regularly?		
Yes	26	32.1
No	55	67.9
Total	71	100.0
Do you talk to your child about school work?		
Yes	73	92.4
No	6	7.6
Total	79	100.0
Would you like to be more involved in your child's school activities?		
Yes	60	76.0
No	19	24.0
Total	79	100.0
Do you feel a part of your child's school?		
Yes	54	68.3
No	23	31.7
Total	77	100.0
Do you help with his/her school work?		
Yes	40	51.2
No	38	48.8
Total	78	100.0
Do you belong to or go to meetings of the P.T.A. or other school organizations?		
Yes	47	58.8
No	33	41.2
Total	80	100.0

you are doing and not on as making a lot of money. Given their relatively low economic status, it is surprising that they are not particularly materialistic. They did feel, however, that young people should get as much as they can out of life.

TABLE 2

Parental Attitudes Toward Education, Work, Success, and Other Related Items

Statement	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
A child's family is very important to him	80	97.6%	2	2.4%
It is important for children to plan for their futures	79	97.5%	2	2.5%
It is more important for children to go to school now than to work	74	91.4%	7	8.6%
People should work for what they get	78	96.3%	3	3.7%
It is important for children to get ahead in life	79	97.5%	2	2.5%
Education is the best way for children to get ahead in life	81	98.8%	1	1.2%
Competition in school work makes a child a better student	65	80.3%	16	19.8%
High school education or less is enough for most girls as they will get married anyway	6	7.4%	75	92.6%
Girls should not be encouraged to work	7	8.9%	72	91.1%
Success means making a lot of money	12	15.4%	66	84.6%
Success means being satisfied and happy with what you are doing	75	93.8%	5	6.3%
A child's chances of making it in life are good	67	85.9%	11	14.1%
A child's chances of getting a good job are good	51	67.1%	25	32.9%
It is important for young people to live and work close to their family, relatives, and friends	44	55.0%	36	45.0%

Statement	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
It is important to keep and be proud of one's heritage	77	98.7%	1	1.3%
It is important for a child to think about what he wants to do in life and do it	79	96.3%	3	3.7%
One should be proud of being a Black	77	98.7%	1	1.3%
It is important for a child to get as much as he can out of life	77	96.3%	3	3.8%
Work is something children like to do	23	30.7%	52	69.3%
Work is something everyone has to do	67	82.7%	14	17.3%
Work is the only way to get ahead	72	92.3%	6	7.7%
High school should prepare a student for college	70	88.6%	9	11.4%
High school should give a student general skills for making a living	77	96.3%	3	3.8%
High school should give a student specific skills for getting a specific job	57	66.2%	26	33.8%
High school should give a student a good background for more advanced vocational/ technical training	78	98.3%	3	3.7%
High school should prepare a student to get along and work with other people	78	96.3%	3	3.7%
High school should prepare a student tc be a good citizen in his community	77	95.1%	4	4.9%
High school should prepare a student for living as well as making a living	73	92.4%	6	7.6%
High school should help a student develop his mental abilities as much as possible	76	92.7%	6	7.3%
High school should help a student develop his physical abilities as much as possible	75	91.5%	7	8.5%
High school should help a student become part of the American way of life	77	96.3%	3	3.8%
High school should help a student overcome his weak areas	73	91.3%	7	8.8%

Black parents disagreed with two statements pertaining to young females. They strongly rejected the idea that "high school education is enough for most girls as they will get married anyway" and that "girls should not be encouraged to work." Given the role of the Black woman in this country and the fact that many of the respondents were mothers, it is not too surprising that they rejected these notions. There were two questions which centered around racial pride and heritage. Black parents strongly indicated support of their cultural heritage and their pride in being Black. Respondents seemed to feel that it is no longer as important to them that young people work close to their families, friends, and relatives. They are beginning to sense that mobility is a fact of life in urban society.

Table 2 lists the remaining statements pertaining to the role of the high school in preparing a student for work, for further education, for being a citizen, and for various other functions. The majority of the Black parents agreed strongly with all the statements given them. The intensity of agreement, however, was lower for one item. Whereas nine out of ten respondents agreed with all the other items concerning the role of the high school, only two-thirds believed that high schools should give a student specific skills for getting a specific job. They felt that high schools should produce a well-rounded individual rather than one who has skills only in a narrow area. Black parents are perhaps too acutely aware of the rapidity of change in society, and therefore believe their child would be better able to cope with those changes if he had a total educational experience which would allow for more flexibility and adaptability on the part of their young son or daughter.

The parent's view of the "typical" VE student parallels that of the Black students and other groups who were asked an identical question: "For which

type of student do you think vocational education programs are best?" Table 3 describes the responses given by Black parents to this item.

TABLE 3

Parent's View of the Type of High School Student Who Should Take Vocational Education

Type of Student	Mentioned		Not Mentioned	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
The student who has to make a living when he graduates.	76	93.8%	5	6.2%
The student who can't do well in an academic program.	50	61.0%	32	39.0%
The student who is very bright.	25	30.5%	57	69.5%
The student who is interested in real things, not just books.	57	69.5%	25	30.5%
The student who comes from a "minority group" (like Blacks and Mexican Americans)	26	31.7%	56	68.3%
Practical students.	44	53.7%	38	46.3%
The student who can't make it in college because he is poor.	50	61.0%	32	39.0%
The student who really doesn't care about school.	35	42.7%	47	57.3%

The four most frequently checked categories were: the student who has to make a living when he graduates; the student who is interested in real things, not just books; the student who can't do well in an academic program; and the student who can't make it in college because he is poor. Parents did not feel that VE was for the student who is very bright or for the student who comes from a minority group. Black parents tend to be very pragmatic about the type of student who should be in VE, especially in a cooperative education program. The student who works while attending school provides a big financial assist to those families which are relatively large and have

a low income. It is also interesting to note that although they support their child's VE program, they do not necessarily feel that such programs are for the minority student.

Future Plans

"What do you think your son/daughter will do when or if he/she graduates from high school?" This question was presented to Black parents not only to get an indication of what they believed their children would do in the future but also to compare their responses with those of the in-school students. The alternatives to which the parents responded were identical to those given the students with the exception of an additional option for girls--marriage plans. (See Table 4.) Parents could check more than one alternative.

TABLE 4

Parent's View of What His Child Would Do When/If He Graduates

Alternative	Number	Percent
Get a job	57	69.5%
Go to college or a university	54	65.9%
Post-secondary training	3	3.7%
Military service	5	6.1%
Business school or private trade school	19	23.2%
Union apprenticeship program	5	6.1%
Go into business or trade by myself or with other	7	8.5%
Get married (for girls only)	20	24.4%

Nearly seven out of ten parents felt that their son/daughter would get a job after graduation while two out of three parents reported that they were going to college. The selection of these two alternatives coincided

with that of the students, although it appeared that students were more intense in saying "I want to get a job." It is rather surprising to find that less than four percent of the parents checked post-secondary training, while nearly one-fourth of the sample checked a business school or private trade school. This could indicate a general lack of knowledge on the parent's part about the community college and other two-year public institutions which could provide some type of technical training. Although Black parents remain realistic about their economic situation--getting a job is still of primary importance--there is an indication that Black parents still feel that going to college is the thing that they would like their child to do. They still subscribe to the belief held by the dominant society--that everyone must obtain a college degree.

Three of the other alternatives checked were minor in comparison. Very few parents saw their children going into the military service, joining a union apprenticeship program, or going into business for themselves. However, nearly one-fourth of the parents believed that their daughters would get married when graduating from high school. A similar number of Black VE female students responding to the A/B questionnaire also said that they were considering marriage within a year after graduation.

Summary

The Black parents interviewed in this study were Texas born with mothers having a higher educational level than fathers. Most were classified as being in the lower occupational categories and as being economically disadvantaged.

Black parents were extremely supportive of their children's educational experiences, including vocational education. They expressed much interest

in their child's schooling but their actual participation in such activities was much lower.

The parents were future oriented, feeling optimistic about their children's chances of "making it" in life. They strongly endorsed the work ethic, but felt that success did not mean making a lot of money, rather being satisfied and happy with what they are doing. Also, parents rejected the idea that girls should not be encouraged to work or pursue higher education after graduating from high school. Black females have traditionally had a high labor force participation rate, and their educational levels, as evidenced here, has sometimes been higher than that of Black males.

The typical VE student was viewed by parents as one who has to make a living, not the bright student, or ironically, the one who comes from a minority group. Black parents believed that upon graduation their sons/daughters would do one of two things: get a job or attend a college or university. Very few viewed post-secondary training as an alternative, although they had been extremely supportive of their child's VE program in high school.

Parent-school relations continue to be of concern to the community and educators alike. Black parents appear to be receptive to any school initiated move to bring them closer together, but, like many other low income groups, Black parents are hindered by economic and time constraints. Nevertheless, parent involvement in school activities should remain a top priority as this involvement will benefit the student in his educational endeavors.

PART III

THE VIEWS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL, COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES AND EMPLOYERS TOWARD VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Part III of this report encompasses responses from other informants who in some manner have contact with or knowledge about school related activities. Chapter 5 analyzes the responses of school personnel, Chapter 6 covers community respondents, and Chapter 7 looks at employers. Each of these groups has a special insight into school operations and the product that leaves the schools. Although each group was administered a separate instrument, the questionnaires contained many similar items. These questionnaires attempted to obtain observations and attitudes concerning vocational and career education, school and job related problems common to all groups but especially Black youth, and other issues affecting the education and training of young people.

A total of 63 school interviews, 41 community interviews, and 87 employer interviews were formally conducted during the course of the project. In addition, many other similar key informants were utilized before, during, and after the major field phase of operation was completed. As in previous research conducted by the Center for Human Resources these formal and informal interviews were especially helpful in formulating project policy and guidelines, questionnaire design, and other methodological concerns. Their insights and perceptions not only facilitated field work but provided staff with a sound framework from which to operate.

CHAPTER 5

THE VIEWS OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Educators are faced with a tremendous challenge because of the changing and complex nature of present day society. It is incumbent upon them to keep up with these changes in order that they may better prepare their students to become useful and contributing members of the world they must enter after graduation from high school. Teachers, counselors, and administrators are the ones that must teach, counsel, provide guidance, and operate the educational systems for the young people who must become the adults of tomorrow.

Profile of School Respondents

In interviewing school people, project staff attempted to talk to those persons who were in a position to provide the most input into this study. Emphasis was, therefore, placed on key in-school personnel and at least one respondent from each of the surveyed cities was interviewed. As in other studies conducted by the Center for Human Resources, school personnel fully cooperated with project staff, and their assistance was very much appreciated.

A total of 63 respondents from various organizational levels within the school setting were formally interviewed by project staff. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the type of school persons interviewed and the city in which they were interviewed. The majority of the respondents were high school VE teachers and secondary school counselors--vocational and academic--persons who are intimately involved with students on a day-to-day basis. Most of those interviewed came from the cities of Houston, Dallas, Galveston, Fort

TABLE 1

School Personnel Interviewed,
by City and Classification

City	No.	Level of Organization	No.
Houston	9	Administrator	5
Austin	2	Principal	1
San Antonio	6	Academic Counselor	5
Dallas	12	Vocational Counselor	5
Fort Worth	6	Other Counselor	1
Tyler	3	Academic Teachers	7
Marshall	1	VE Teachers	31
Beaumont	5	Other	6
Waco	5		
Port Arthur	3	Not Given	2
Galveston	11		
Total	63	Total	63

Worth, and San Antonio with the remainder being divided among the rest of the cities surveyed.

Attitudes Toward Vocational Education

School respondents were asked to indicate the degree of support they gave vocational education programs in their school settings. They were also asked to respond to a series of statements which more specifically inquired into the role and function of vocational education and its related activities. The responses given indicate that educators are very receptive to the idea of vocational education. For example, when asked directly how they felt about such programs, 58 out of 63 respondents indicated that they "supported vocational education very strongly," whereas the remainder said that they "supported the concept, but not the way it presently operates." None

responded that they did not support vocational education at all. In a previous study conducted by the Center for Human Resources where community and school responses were combined, there was a greater percentage of responses indicating that although they supported vocational education, they were dissatisfied with its mode of operation.* Also, vocational personnel, more so than other persons, exhibited strong commitment to their programs.

Table 2 indicates that the majority of educators agreed that vocational education programs should be expanded in the schools and that additional financial support be provided them. There was also general support for the idea that more students should be involved in vocational education curricula and that efforts should be made to make more parents aware of these programs. Strong support was voiced for greater efforts in "selling" the concept of vocational education to the community at large.

An item which elicited overwhelming disagreement was the statement "I think that vocational education students should consider vocational education only if they aren't going to college." One statement which evoked a mixed response was "I think that high schools use vocational education programs as a 'dumping ground' for students who can't make it anywhere else in school." Thus, the feeling that some vocational programs are used to track the "slow" or the "problem" student still persists even among school people. This resurrects feelings that vocational education is a second rate curriculum because of the quality of its students. Such an image evokes negative attitudes among minority groups who might feel that their children are being placed in these programs. This tends to hinder the activities of school personnel in trying to recruit Black and Brown students who might otherwise benefit from occupational training programs.

*Mexican American Youth and Vocational Education in Texas (1973).

TABLE 2

The Attitudes of School Personnel Toward
Vocational Education and Related Activities

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think that vocational education in general is a good idea	52	83.8%	9	14.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.6%
I think that all students should take some vocational education while in high school	26	42.6%	22	36.0%	13	21.3%	0	0.0%
I think that more vocational education should be offered in high school	38	60.3%	24	38.1%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%
I think that more parents should be made aware of the vocational education programs in high school	51	80.9%	11	17.4%	1	1.5%	0	0.0%
I think that more students should take advantage of vocational education courses in high school	38	60.3%	23	36.5%	1	1.6%	1	1.6%
I think that the Texas Employment Commission should be more involved with high school students, V.E. teachers and counselors	33	53.2%	24	38.7%	5	8.0%	0	0.0%
I think that vocational education students are generally better prepared for work than students in general or academic curricula	36	57.1%	24	38.1%	2	3.1%	1	1.6%
I think that vocational education students generally have better work habits and attitudes than students in general or academic curricula	34	53.9%	24	38.1%	4	6.3%	1	1.6%
I think that high school students should consider vocational education only if they aren't going to college	1	1.6%	5	8.0%	38	61.2%	18	29.0%

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think that high schools use vocational education programs as a "dumping ground" for students who can't make it anywhere else in school	13	21.3%	23	37.7%	18	29.5%	7	11.4%
I think that the training given in high school vocational education programs is sufficient to prepare a student for a job after he graduates	9	15.0%	35	58.3%	16	26.6%	0	0.0%
I think that high schools should receive more money for vocational education programs	33	54.1%	27	44.2%	1	1.6%	0	0.0%
I think that there should be centralized vocational high schools	39	65.0%	20	33.3%	1	1.6%	0	0.0%
I think that vocational education needs to be "sold" to the community	11	18.0%	26	42.6%	21	34.4%	3	4.9%
I think that vocational education programs are a good way of reducing the high dropout rate among minority students	46	73.0%	14	22.2%	3	4.7%	0	0.0%
I think that high schools should provide some type of placement services for their students	37	58.7%	19	30.1%	6	9.5%	1	1.5%
I think that vocational education programs in high school give students a marketable skill	35	56.4%	22	35.4%	3	4.8%	2	3.2%

Career Education

Career education is a new concept that has recently been introduced into the educational field. It has been endorsed by national, state, and local

educators. Although its definition varies, its basic premise remains the same--that of preparing an individual for a successful life and career through his educational experiences. However, career education has been construed to be many things. Some people continue to equate career education with vocational education. It should be made clear that vocational education is an integral part of career education, but career education encompasses all aspects of the educational system. John R. Guemple, Texas Associate Commissioner for Occupational Education and Technology, in a speech to a group of educators in Houston, described career education as simply "teacher attitude." The Advisory Council for Technical-Vocational Education in Texas has prepared a Career Education Model which has five major components: Career Awareness (K-6); Career Orientation and Investigation (6-8); Career Exploration (8-10); Preparation for Career (9-12 for some individuals and 9-16 for others); and Continuing Adult Training, Retraining, Upgrading, Basic Education or Avocation. This model represents an on-going, lifelong process which begins at home and continues throughout an individual's lifetime.*

Most school people interviewed expressed support for the career education and appeared to be knowledgeable about its objectives. Of the 63 respondents, 53 indicated support for the concept of career education, and only one did not support the concept. A few felt that if they know more about career education they would probably support it. They also agreed that career education activities should be initiated in all schools, that career education will improve the image of vocational education, and that teachers should try to integrate career education activities into their

*For a complete and comprehensive discussion of career education, the following sources are suggested: American Vocational Journal (March 1972) and Career Education: What It Is and How to Do It by Kenneth B. Hoyt, Rupert N. Evans, Edward F. Machin, and Garth L. Mangum (1973).

TABLE 3

The Attitudes of School Personnel
Toward Career Education

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think that career education activities should be initiated in all schools	39	61.9%	20	31.7%	3	4.7%	1	1.5%
I think that career education will improve the image of vocational education	23	37.7%	23	37.7%	14	22.9%	1	1.6%
I think that teachers should try to integrate career education activities into their classwork	35	58.3%	23	38.3%	1	1.7%	1	1.7%

classwork (Table 3). Although those persons interviewed by this project seemed to be aware of career education and its implications, it was their feeling that there were many within the school setting who either did not know much about it or had misconceptions about career education.

Generally, school respondents supported the concepts of vocational and career education and endorsed increased program development in these areas. However, the relationship between vocational education and career education did not seem to be fully understood by some educational personnel. Vocational educators, more so than others in the school setting, appear to be more receptive toward career education related activities.

Adequacy of Vocational Programs

One of the criticisms that vocational education programs have lived with is that they do not adequately meet the needs of either students or the community in general. In previous studies conducted by the Center for Human

Resources, respondents have felt that, in general, vocational programs in the school districts were not meeting the needs of their community or doing a good job preparing young people for the world of work. Persons interviewed by this project staff felt somewhat more positive toward the adequacy of secondary school vocational education programs.

TABLE 4

School Personnel Response to "Are Vocational Education Programs Meeting the Needs of Your Community and Its Students?"

	Total Response	Percent Responding Yes	Percent Responding No	Percent Responding Don't Know
Community	63	30.1%	49.2%	20.6%
Students	60	28.3%	60.0%	11.6%
Blacks	53	22.6%	62.2%	15.0%
Mexican Americans	52	25.0%	55.7%	19.2%

Table 4 details the responses given by school respondents when asked if they believed VE programs were meeting the needs of the community and its students. Nearly half indicated that VE programs were not meeting the needs of the community while slightly more than half said that such programs were not meeting the needs of either its majority or minority students. Although some did not know if VE programs were meeting the needs of the students and the community in general, most persons interviewed nevertheless felt that there was definitely room for improvement in occupational training programs.

However, school respondents believed that vocational programs, when compared to general high school programs, did a better job of preparing young people for the world of work (Table 5). They rated vocational programs as

TABLE 5

Percentage of School Personnel Response Concerning the Preparation Students Receive in High School and In High School Vocational Programs

Preparation	High Schools N = 61	Vocational Programs N = 62
They do a good job	6.5%	39.3%
They do a somewhat adequate job	62.3%	54.1%
They do a poor job	29.5%	6.5%
They don't prepare them at all	1.6%	1.6%

doing a "good job" or an "adequate job" more often than a general high school program. Also, school respondents thought that the training given in a high school vocational program was sufficient to prepare a student for a job after graduation and that the vocational student generally had better skills preparation, work habits and attitudes than non-vocational students. This is reflected in the responses in Table 2.

Despite any reservations held by school respondents toward vocational education programs, they still believed that a high school training program was one of the best places where young people could learn a skill. School respondents were given a list and asked to check those items which indicated where they thought young people acquired the skills necessary to obtain a job. High school programs (checked by 61 out of 63 persons) ranked next to on-the-job training, which was checked by all of the 63 respondents. The third most frequently mentioned choice--checked by 45 respondents--was a community vocational/technical college. Other possible sources checked included a private business or trade school (39), a union apprenticeship program

(35), and acquiring skills on their own (22). When asked which of these sources was the one most likely place where young people acquire skills training, a high school vocational program was mentioned most frequently as the best place where young people could acquire skills.

To summarize, while school respondents overwhelmingly supported the concept of vocational education within the secondary school setting, they were not sure that these programs were totally meeting the needs of the community or its students. They did feel, however, that occupational training programs were doing a better job in preparing students for employment than a general high school program. School respondents also felt that a high school VE program was one of the most available sources where students could acquire a skill. Given the fact that such programs are available to students while students are still in school, they are the most logical source of skills attainment other than OJT.

Vocational Education and Blacks

School respondents, in a series of open-ended questions, were asked to give their views on any advantages and/or disadvantages that vocational education had for Black students who participated in such programs. School respondents, in discussing advantages of such programs, most frequently stated that vocational education gave the Black student an opportunity to learn a skill while he earned money, would provide him not only with a job, but a "better job" in terms of salary and type of job, and that generally it would give the student an advantage over the student who did not participate in vocational education. Only one respondent believed that vocational training did not give the Black student any kind of advantage or benefit. Several respondents felt that such training could provide a student with

better work habits, pride in his job, awareness about himself and his job, job satisfaction, and financial rewards. If the student was not college bound, then VE was seen as a definite advantage. In general, respondents felt that occupational training in high school was a way of helping a student "get his foot in the door" when he went out to look for a job.

Whereas only one respondent said that there were no advantages to be gained from vocational training in high school, about half (32) of the respondents felt that there were no disadvantages for the Black students who participated in this training. The disadvantages that they did list centered around: discrimination in the selection and recruitment of students into VE programs; the inclination to view students in VE programs as "second rate" students in terms of ability and achievement; the tendency of VE programs to lead students away from college preparatory curriculum, and the feeling that VE programs sometimes prepared students for jobs that were non-existent in the local labor market or for menial jobs. Although respondents seemed to indicate that high school occupational training programs would be of value to Black students who enrolled in them, several questions were raised. For example, who recruits into VE programs and how are recruits selected? Also, in the school respondents' view, what kind of students make the best prospects for vocational programs?

In the past much of the criticism that schools have received from the community has centered around student recruitment, especially in schools that had a substantial minority enrollment. It seemed that more Black and Brown students were channeled into VE programs primarily because of their ethnicity or because they were "problem" or "slow" students. Consequently, VE programs developed a reputation as a program for those students that did

not fit into the general or academic curriculum. Many referred to the VE curriculum as a "second rate" curriculum because of the assumed low quality of its students. However, recent events seem to be somewhat altering that image of vocational education.

A few vocational programs (such as the cooperative and technical programs) recruit the top notch student. Students in these programs are better screened by the VE teachers and counselors, and, in many instances, the students themselves initiate the inquiries into their favorite VE program. School respondents in this study--who were mainly teachers and counselors--were asked to state how students were recruited into vocational programs.

In terms of criteria used to select VE students, school personnel said that interest, ability, and grades were the main factors used for recruitment purposes. Willingness to work, age, and school classification were also listed as important factors. In some instances, schools rely on aptitude tests such as the General Aptitude Test Battery to determine the areas in which the student exhibits an aptitude or interest.

Students, according to school respondents, are recruited into VE programs by a variety of means. The two most important means are vocational counselors (23) and vocational teachers (19) who, after an individual interview with the student, determine if he can be placed in a VE program. Academic counselors (7), academic teachers (3), and vocational coordinators (6) were also mentioned as persons who acted in recruitment into VE programs. Other vocational students (5) and vocational clubs (3) were also mentioned as means by which students are recruited into VE. School respondents also mentioned assemblies (5), publicity such as pamphlets and brochures (7), films (2), junior high programs (7), and parents as sources used to recruit

students into VE. Responses given by Black students interviewed by this study indicated that they themselves were in vocational education programs for two main reasons: (1) because they liked them and (2) they felt that these programs would be helpful to them in the future.* There was very little indication by the students that they were tracked into vocational education programs.

Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education

As discussed previously, there has always been controversy as to what type of student is best suited to participate in vocational education programs. School personnel were given a list of statements describing types of students and then asked to check the types of students described in the list they thought were best suited for vocational education. The list included nine descriptions in addition to an "other" category. Multiple responses were allowed to this question.

Table 6 indicates that the three most frequently checked categories were as follows: "the student who has to make a living when he graduates" (96.3 percent), "the student who is interested in real things, not just books" (71.4 percent), and "the practical student" (61.9 percent). School personnel view the student who needs to work (which in this population is substantial) as the most likely prospect for skills training. On the other hand, the least mentioned categories included "the student who is very bright" (41.2 percent), "the student who comes from a minority group" (41.2 percent), and "the student who doesn't care about school" (44.4 percent). About half of the school respondents checked the categories "the student who can't make

*See Black Student Profile, Chapter 2.

TABLE 6

School Respondents' Views of the Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education (Total Respondents = 63)

Type of Student	No. of Responses	% of Total
The student who has to make a living when he graduates	61	96.8%
The student who is interested in real things, not just books	45	71.4%
The practical student	39	61.9%
The student who can't do well in an academic program	36	57.1%
The student who can't make it in college because he is poor	31	49.2%
The student who really doesn't care about school	28	44.4%
The student who is very bright	26	41.2%
The student who comes from a minority group (like Blacks and Mexican Americans)	26	41.2%
Other	6	9.5%

it in college because he is poor" (49.2 percent) and "the student who can't do well in an academic program" (57.1 percent).

School respondents seemed to be saying that the "bright student" or the "minority group student" are not the best descriptions of candidates for vocational programs. In the latter case, there is a reluctance to label or categorize Black and Brown students as potential VE enrollees because in the past there has been an over-representation of minority students in such programs. In a similar item in the A/B instrument, students generally agreed that the student who has to work after graduation is the student who should be in a VE program.

Job Problems Encountered by Young People

Young people have historically been characterized by major job related problems as evidenced by their high unemployment rates. Perhaps the main problems faced by young people are their inexperience and lack of exposure to the working world. Having no work experience and/or skills are two of the most frequently mentioned barriers to employment that young people face. Lack of pre-employment skills is fairly common among high school students especially on the part of non-vocational education students. One of this study's major objectives was to assess the type and degree of job-related problems prevalent among youth in general and Black youth in particular.

There were several items directed to school personnel that inquired into the kinds of problems young people might encounter in getting a job and keeping a job once they get it. School respondents were also asked if Blacks had additional job problems other than the ones pertaining to youth in general. Three were open-ended questions, and on another question respondents were given a list and asked to rate the items in terms of degree of difficulty these problems give the young job seeker.

Table 7 indicates that school respondents believed that young people have a certain amount of difficulty in their job seeking activities. Persons interviewed were given a list of items to rate on a three-point scale ranging from "1=no trouble at all" to "3=a lot of trouble." It is significant to note that school respondents felt students had at least "some trouble" with each of the problems listed. The lowest mean score was 2.12 (knowing how to dress and knowing where to get information about jobs) and the highest score was 2.53 (having no work experience and having no skills). Two other items also had mean scores: presenting themselves to employers (2.46) and difficulties

TABLE 7

Degree of Difficulty in Problems Encountered
by Young People in Job Seeking Activities
(1 = no trouble; 2 = some trouble; 3 = a lot of trouble)

Type Problem	Mean Value
Filling out applications	2.36
Interviewing for a job	2.33
Difficulty in expressing themselves well	2.44
Knowing how to dress	2.12
Presenting or "selling themselves" to employers	2.46
Having no work experience	2.53
Having no skill(s)	2.53
Getting around (transportation)	2.15
Knowing where to go to get information about jobs	2.23
Not being old enough	2.12
Not knowing what a job is all about	2.30
Other (please explain)	1.80

in expressing themselves (2.44). School respondents also believed young people had difficulty with such pre-employment skills as filling out applications (2.36), and interviewing for a job (2.33). Students, on the other hand, perceived themselves as having less difficulty with most of these problems. The item having the highest mean score for students (Non-VE, female) was having no work experience (1.99)*

*See Table 15, Black Student Profile, Chapter 2.

On the open-ended question relating to problems youth have in looking for a job, school respondents felt that lack of experience was the major problem that the students faced (25). The second most mentioned problem was appearance (13). Many school respondents felt that the student's poor appearance, coupled with his reluctance to do something about it, created an additional problem. In some instances dress and grooming styles, especially among Blacks, seemed inappropriate to some school people. This was more pronounced among employers, and it seemed to be the area in which the greatest clash of values between young people and older adults appeared. Lack of skills (11) was also frequently mentioned by school respondents as a problem that young people have in trying to obtain employment. Other problems mentioned included poor communication skills, poor attitude, lack of self-awareness, not being aware of job or job duties, and limited pre-employment skills (interviewing and filling out applications).

School respondents, when asked what problems young people had in keeping a job, listed tardiness, absenteeism, getting along with people, inability to follow orders and directions, a negative attitude toward work, and appearance as major problems. Inability or unwillingness to accept responsibility and undesirable work habits were also seen as problems young people encountered, but very few respondents felt that inability "to do the job" was a problem. Major comments about such problems centered around things besides the ability to perform the job at hand. The lack of positive work attitudes and traits appeared to affect job stability more than any other factor, with dependability being the major problem among young employees.

Additional Job Related Problems Faced by Black Youth

Another open-ended question further inquired into the special job problems encountered by Black youth. Of the 58 persons who responded to this question, only 15 said that Blacks did not have special job-related problems. The major problem that Black youth faced, according to school personnel, was discrimination by employers both before and after they obtained a job; many times employers did not consider Blacks for a position simply because they were Black and in some instances the jobs in which they were placed were menial, low-skilled, and low-paying. In addition, school respondents indicated that those who were placed on jobs had difficulty advancing or being promoted. Whites still have some difficulty in understanding the Black employee, and there is a certain lack of communication between Black employees and white employers. Other problems listed by school respondents included: lack of self-confidence, lack of preparation, not being able to follow orders, appearance, and negative attitude ("carrying a chip on their shoulder").

In summary, school respondents felt that young job seekers are faced with problems arising out of their limited experience in and exposure to the world of work--lack of work experience and lack of a saleable skill. An additional problem was dress and grooming, an issue which seemed to surface more in this study than in previous studies. Limited pre-employment skills, especially among those who did not participate in vocational education programs, seemed to be somewhat of a problem. Dependability, negative work attitudes and habits, and getting along with people were the most frequently mentioned problems that young people, according to school respondents, possessed. Although all youth are plagued with these kind of job problems, some school respondents believed that Black youth had additional job-related problems, with discrimination being the major one.

Importance of Career and Job Related Topics

After discussing problems that young people encounter in the world of work, respondents were given a series of statements concerned with job and career needs and asked to rate each statement in terms of importance. Their responses appear in Table 8. Each item was rated on a four point scale.

TABLE 8

Mean Value of School Respondents' Views
on the Importance of Career and Job Related Topics
(1 = very important; 2 = somewhat important;
3 = not very important; and 4 = not important at all)

Item	Mean Value
To know how to get a job	1.11
To know where to look for a job	1.09
To know what type of careers are available to them	1.19
To know which types of careers students might fit into (self-awareness)	1.31
To know where to go to find occupational literature, (like the Occupational Outlook Handbook, Career pamphlets, etc.)	1.50
To know what to expect in the world of work	1.27
To understand the problems other people run into while looking for a job	1.54
To know what type of education and training is required for a job	1.12

School respondents believed that all of the topics were very important although some were more important than others. The range of responses was from 1.09 (to know where to look for a job) to 1.54 (to understand the problems other people run into while looking for a job). Clustered between these two topics were such things as to know how to get a job, to know what type of education and training is required for a job, to know what type of careers are available to them, to know what types of careers students might fit into, to know what to expect in the world of work, and to know where to go to find occupational information. The mean responses for each of the above items is shown in Table 8.

Discussion of these topics was deemed as very important by the school respondents. When asked if such job/career topics should be discussed in a special course while the student is still in high school, 60 out of 63 respondents answered affirmatively. They believed that such a course could be taught by persons who were in the area of vocational education such as teachers, counselors, and coordinators as these persons were viewed as being more aware of the working world. More than half of the respondents listed VE personnel. A few believed that career counselors should be teaching these courses while others felt that representatives from industry should come into the schools and talk to students about jobs and career related topics. A few mentioned that this should be everybody's job and that such topics should be integrated into every teachers curriculum, vocational as well as academic.

Overall, respondents felt strongly that this kind of information should be presented to, and discussed with, students before they leave high school. Employers and community people interviewed also felt that such a course was a "must" in the high school as it was particularly obvious to the employer that many students who graduated from high school did not possess such simple skills as filling out applications.

As a rule, such topics are discussed by teachers in subject areas like Distributive Education, Coordinated Vocational Academic Education, and some of the other cooperative education subjects. However, in many of the other vocational subjects, and definitely in Non-VE subjects, pre-employment skills are not taught to students.

Availability of Placement and Counseling Services in the High Schools

Counseling and placement activities in the high school should serve the function of easing the student's transition from high school to the world of work. Ideally, these services should be available to every student that requests assistance. In reality, however, school systems are hampered because of the aforementioned shortage of counselors resulting in the high student-to-counselor ratio. Job placement assistance in the high schools should be an integral part of vocational education programs and, where feasible, of the total school setting. Most school personnel interviewed agreed with this view and further indicated that some type of job placement activities were being conducted in their schools. Nearly 90 percent said that job placement was a legitimate function of the school and that they were in fact conducting it.

Job placement activities were conducted mainly by vocational education personnel--vocational teachers, counselors and coordinators. In a few instances, non-vocational personnel such as the assistant principal, academic counselor, and career education specialist served this function. Generally, it appears that vocational personnel conduct job placement activities on a more systematic basis than non-vocational personnel who get involved in such activities only incidently; i.e., with "hardship" cases. Several of the school districts surveyed had systemwide placement centers, but this was more

common in the larger cities such as Houston, Dallas, and Austin. The school respondents indicated that most schools conduct formal and informal placement activities within the confines of the vocational teachers' or counselors' classrooms and/or office.

In summary, although some occupational counseling and job placement are conducted in the schools, the recipients of such services are usually a limited number of VE students. Job placement and counseling activities are also conducted mostly by vocational personnel. The majority of the students who are not in VE programs, however, do not receive such services, but as evidenced by their responses in the A/B questionnaire, they would more than likely partake of the services if they were offered.

Recent Trends in Students' Post-High School Plans

School respondents were asked if in their opinion, there had been a change recently in the number of graduates who opted for alternatives other than attending a four year college or university. It was their feeling that there seemed to be a trend developing with fewer students attending four year colleges and more students contemplating either a job or additional skills training after graduation. Of those that answered this question, 43 out of 53 respondents agreed that more students were going directly into the job market while 14 did not know, and 10 persons did not answer this question. Some respondents offered comments as to why they believed this was the case. These comments included: many students cannot afford college; the draft has been discontinued; students are aware that there are fewer job openings for college graduates; the emphasis seems to be on vocational training; and there are good paying jobs for those students that have a skill. Also, the fact that many students need a job after graduation is a big factor. Student

responses seemed to bear this out as students indicated that their major preference after graduation was to "get a job."

Respondents also indicated that there seemed to be more students interested in obtaining some type of post-high school skills training rather than attending a four year college. Out of 50 respondents, 40 said that this was the case while only three responded negatively. Five persons said they did not know, and 13 did not respond to this question. Although this change was slight, it was visible to many counselors and teachers. The main reason for this change, according to school respondents, was the recent increase in community colleges and technical institutes throughout the State of Texas. Skills training was now available to more students, and the schools which offered this training were more often than not in or near their hometown. Career education was also mentioned as a factor for promoting student interest in good paying and satisfying careers that do not require four years of training. The spiraling increase in tuition and living expenses required for attending college made attendance at these institutions nearly impossible for many students coming out of high school. Also, parents were gradually accepting the fact that not all students have to attend college in order to be considered "successful."

When asked, however, if society in general and their school in particular still placed more emphasis on young people getting a college degree rather than on skills training, 61 out of 63 respondents indicated that society still placed greater priority on college training while 41 out of 58 felt that their school placed more emphasis on the academic curriculum rather than on skills training. Thus, the feeling still seems to persist, more so in society than in the schools, that the emphasis is on college trained students rather than on vocationally trained students.

In summary, school respondents felt that more students were spurning four year colleges and instead getting a job or acquiring additional job training in community/technical institutes. Although schools and society still seemed to emphasize the college degree route, students and some parents were beginning to change their attitude toward skills training, out of necesity in some instances. The changing demand in the labor market and the increase in community/technical colleges throughout the state have definitely contributed to this change.

Recommendations for Improving Schools and Vocational Programs

School respondents were asked to suggest improvements or changes that would help improve educational programs and services in their school and school district. There were open-ended questions inquiring about these topics: "What changes do you think would help vocational education programs in your school?" "As an educator, what do you think TEA should do or should not do to make improvements in your school district, if any?" and "Are there any programs or courses in your school or school district that you would like to see initiated?"

Two major changes or improvements suggested by respondents were: there should be more attempts by the schools and vocational programs to "sell" VE programs within the schools and in the community, and schools should expand both plant facilities and vocational programs.

Awareness of an attitude toward vocational programs by school personnel, especially academic teachers and counselors, has been of special concern to vocational educators.

One item in this questionnaire inquired into intraschool communication problems between vocational and academic programs. Out of 60 respondents, only 17 felt there was good interaction between VE and Non-VE programs, while

36 believed there was communication to some extent; 7 felt there was no communication at all. When asked if Non-VE personnel were aware of the scope of vocational programs in their school, more than 60 percent indicated that these persons were generally aware of the scope of such programs. However, even among many who responded positively, the feeling prevailed that more information about VE programs and activities needed to be filtered down to all persons in the school setting. Vocational personnel, in particular, felt that there needed to be a change in the attitude of some non-vocational administrators, counselors, and teachers toward vocational education programs. Some academically oriented school personnel still view vocational education as a stepchild, and this was seen as detrimental to vocational programs.

Most respondents felt strongly that school vocational programs and facilities should be expanded and informed. Building new facilities would help the image of vocational education and attract more students. Other suggested improvements or changes included: increase career education activities/personnel; increase and improve instructional staff, especially vocational counselors; recruit more students who have the interest and ability to participate in vocational programs; better screening procedures for recruiting students into VE; involve more people from industry and the community in vocational programs and vocational planning; and more in-service training for school personnel. In regard to in-service training, most school respondents (49 out of 58) indicated that in their schools' in-service training programs, some provision was made for vocational and career education.* However, the effectiveness of in-service training in most areas has not been evaluated adequately to determine if participants in such programs actually receive some benefit from them.

*It should be noted that many of the respondents were vocational personnel who, therefore, were required to attend in-service meetings dealing with vocational education. Academic personnel are less prone and perhaps, not required to attend such meetings.

Role of the Texas Education Agency (TEA)

School respondents were asked what TEA should do or should not do to make improvements in the school district. The most frequently mentioned activity was in the area of funding. They felt TEA should provide more money for building and upgrading vocational facilities and existing vocational programs in areas where they are needed. TEA should make some effort to help "sell" vocational education to the public through public relations campaigns, community meetings and the like. Some felt that the Agency should encourage school districts to add more vocational education personnel, especially career and vocational counselors.

Although a few respondents felt that TEA should not exercise its evaluative and supervisory function as much, some believed that TEA should see to it that guidelines, rules and regulations, and funds are used in a manner to promote vocational education in order to meet the needs of the students. School respondents stated that TEA should make sure that the funds it expends are used where they were intended to be used, and that TEA should see to it that local school programs--both vocational and academic--are tailored to meet the needs of the local community. A few of the respondents also believed that the Agency should take the initiative in promoting career education statewide and in local areas, as career education was seen as a vehicle which could be very beneficial to students at all levels of the educational setting.

Summary

School personnel generally support the concept of vocational education in the high school, but feel that the needs of students, particularly minority students are not being totally met. The lack of VE program variety, inadequate facilities, poor administration and operational procedures, and the

inability of VE to include more students in its programs are seen as major shortcomings in VE. Although there has been some improvement in attitude toward VE recently, there are still some segments within the school setting who either do not know anything about it or have misconceptions about VE.

School respondents generally saw more advantages for Blacks participating in VE programs than disadvantages. Skills training and getting a better job were seen as two major advantages while recruitment practices and the tendency of VE programs to lead Black students away from a college curriculum were seen as disadvantages.

The school-to-work transition was seen as a major step for high school students and school people, especially minority students, felt that all students were ill-prepared for this. They believed that some type of job orientation course should be included in the student's preparation and that career education activities should be increased in the schools.

As for career education, most school personnel interviewed supported the concept and knew what career education entailed. However, it was their feeling that, like VE, there were many other school personnel who did not know much about career education or harbored misconceptions about it. Although vocational people have been very receptive to career education, the relationship between career education and vocational education is not fully understood by many within the school setting. It is essential that career education be fully explained to all teachers, counselors, and administrative personnel in the schools.

School personnel made several recommendations for the improvement of the educational opportunities, particularly in the area of vocational education. These included improving professional development activities for all school personnel, expand VE programs, diversify its offerings and at the same time promote VE programs within the school setting, build better facilities, and increase community involvement in school activities.

CHAPTER 6

COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

An important facet of any program is community input. Oftentimes community people are better able to pinpoint specific community concerns and problems within the educational structures in their locale. This project did not attempt a comprehensive interviewing effort with community informants; rather it was interested in obtaining observations and attitudes toward a variety of topics, including the design and implementation of this project. The brief instrument administered to this group inquired into the respondent's perception and knowledge of vocational career education programs, problems that young people, and especially Black youth, encountered in school and job related matters. It also gave informants an opportunity to suggest or recommend ways in which the schools could better meet the needs of all students in the community.

Profile of Selected Community Informants

Most of the community informants were interviewed during the initial phases of the project prior to the field phase. Consequently, many of the respondents came from Houston and Galveston (21). The remaining community persons interviewed (20) came from the cities of Waco, Prairie View, Texas City, Austin, Bryan, and Dallas. In addition to the 41 informants whose responses are discussed in this chapter, project staff consulted a number of other community persons who provided valuable insights concerning vocational education.

A variety of individuals from diverse areas of the community were interviewed. Ten were administrative personnel and staff from community social service organizations. Nine were from state and federal agencies such as the Texas Employment Commission and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Eight persons represented college administrators, guidance and counseling personnel, and instructional staff from Prairie View A&M University and Texas Southern University. Five individuals represented city and county government, and a similar number came from the business sector, i.e., chemical industry, insurance, etc. Four persons preferred to be labelled "community representatives."

Community Attitudes Toward the Concept and Adequacy of Secondary School Programs

There were several questions which centered on the respondents' opinions of secondary school programs and their adequacy in preparing young people for the world of work. In answering the question, "How do you feel about the general concept of vocational education in the high schools?" only one out of 41 respondents stated that he did not support the concept of vocational education, while 30 strongly supported it and ten supported the concept but not the way in which vocational education presently operates. Therefore, it appears that, from those interviewed, vocational education is a viable program within the school setting, although some have misgivings about its mode of operation.

In terms of preparing students for the world of work, more community respondents indicated that vocational education programs did a "good job" (7) or an "adequate job" (23) than a general high school program in which only one respondent believed that schools did a "good job" and 24 felt that they did an "adequate job." The remainder indicated that schools did a "poor job" or "didn't prepare them at all." It is interesting to note that while a

majority of the respondents felt vocational education programs did a good or adequate job in preparing students for the world of work, many of them did not feel that vocational education was meeting the needs of the students or the community in general.

Community respondents were asked if vocational programs were meeting the needs of (1) the community in general, (2) all students in the high school, and (3) minority groups in the high school. In each case, about half of the respondents felt that such programs were not meeting the needs of the community in general or of any of the student groups in high school. A substantial number of the respondents--about 40 percent--said that they did not know if vocational education programs were adequately meeting the needs of the community and students; however, only about one out of ten respondents believed that vocational education offerings were doing their job.

Community people interviewed in this project felt that society had placed more emphasis on young people getting a college degree rather than on learning a skill. An overwhelming number of respondents (38 out of 41) believed that this attitude was prevalent in their communities despite the fact that many college graduates were finding it increasingly difficult to find suitable employment after graduation.

Community respondents were asked where they believed that young people acquired the skills necessary to obtain a job. The three most frequently mentioned sources were on-the-job training (38), high school vocational programs (33), and a community vocational/technical college (28). A surprisingly large number of respondents (21) felt that students could acquire skills by joining a union apprenticeship program and by attending a private business or trade school (22). Some felt that young people could acquire skills on their own (19).

Respondents were then asked to list the one most likely source to help young people acquire the skills necessary to get a job. Again, the three top choices were on-the-job training (17), high school vocational programs (11), and community colleges (7). It appears then that on-the-job training and high school vocational programs are perceived by community people as being the best sources of acquiring job skills.

Career Education

One of the thrusts of career education has been to expose young people to the full spectrum of jobs available in the labor market, instill a sense of identification and pride in jobs which many times are looked down on by society in general. It was generally believed that many of the best paying and more available jobs could be secured only by attending college and securing a college degree. Recent events in the labor market have exposed this fallacy, but many school systems still regard vocational education programs as a stepchild and do not fully understand the relationship between career education and vocational education.* This same feeling also persists to some extent in the community.

Community respondents were asked to give their feelings concerning career education. Sixteen respondents either did not know what career education was all about or did not have enough information about career education. Twenty-four out of 41 respondents indicated that they strongly supported the concept of career education while one respondent stated that he did not support career education. It appears that, like vocational education, the public generally supports career education but feels a need for more information concerning this program. It is apparent that educators--both state and local--should

*See discussion concerning Career Education, Chapter 5 of this report.

make more of an effort to explain the concept of career education to the public and, at the same time, see to it that it is properly explained and implemented in the schools. Career education should not be allowed to acquire a tarnished reputation, as this will dilute its effectiveness in the educational system, particularly in the minority communities.

Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education

Respondents were asked to determine which type of student they felt was best suited for vocational education programs. They were provided with the same list of alternatives that was provided to all students, employers, and school informants interviewed by this project. Table 1 illustrates the responses given by community people.

TABLE 1

Type of Student Best Suited for Vocational Education

Total Respondents=41

Type of Student	Mentioned	Not Mentioned
The student who has to make a living when he graduates	32	8
The student who cannot do well in an academic program	23	17
The student who is very bright	3	37
The student who is interested in real things, not just books	20	20
The student who comes from a minority group	5	35
The practical student	13	28
The student who cannot go to college because he is poor	15	25
The student who doesn't care about school	11	30
Other	4	36

Community people felt that vocational education was best for the student who has to make a living when he graduates, the student who cannot do well in an academic program, and the student who is interested in real things, not just books. On the contrary, community respondents felt that vocational education was not for the student who is very bright, the student who comes from a minority group, and the student who doesn't care about school. This seems to indicate that community people still view vocational programs as a program for the student who is not college bound and who is academically weak. They also feel strongly that vocational programs are not for students who come from a minority group as, in some instances, there is already an over-representation of minority group members in such programs.

Black Youth and Vocational Education

Community respondents were asked to cite the advantages and disadvantages that they felt a vocational program offered a Black student at the high school level. It is interesting to note that more community respondents (21 out of 41) said that vocational education had no disadvantages while only three of the respondents said vocational education had no advantages whatsoever. This seems to indicate that, in principle, the community persons interviewed believed that vocational education was a sound program in the high schools, but they seemed to have some misgivings about program procedures, especially in the area of recruiting.

Advantages of VE Programs

By far the greatest advantages that community respondents saw in vocational education programs for high school students were in two areas: vocational education would provide the student with a job skill and job training, and vocational education was a vehicle through which students could earn a living

and obtain better paying jobs. They felt that participating in VE programs gave them a definite advantage over those students who did not participate in them, particularly in terms of getting the job and demanding a higher salary once they were hired. Community respondents generally felt that students in vocational education programs would be "better prepared" than Non-VE students to make the transition between a high school setting and a job setting.

Community persons also believed that, by participating in vocational education programs, students would be provided with information about different jobs in the labor market or at least be exposed to jobs that they ordinarily would not know about if they were in a Non-VE course preparation in high school. One advantage that some persons thought VE provided the student was that it initiated the student to the kind of things that are generally expected of him on the job and in the "world of work."

A few respondents also felt that VE was good for the student that was not college bound, for the disadvantaged individual, and for the Black youth who was a potential dropout. Only one respondent felt that VE was good for the student who was college bound. Other advantages that VE offered the student were in developing self-awareness, leadership skills, providing a shorter training period (compared to going to college), providing a job in the student's local area, providing a skill that could lead to eventual self-employment, and also learning a skill that has enabled the student to provide a vital service to his community.

Disadvantages of VE Programs

Overall, fewer disadvantages (22) than advantages (61) were cited by community respondents for Black students participating in vocational education programs. Out of 41 respondents, nearly half felt that VE offered no

disadvantages at all. As in the case of Mexican American youth, the persons interviewed believed that the two major disadvantages of vocational education were that the students were "tracked" into the program because it was assumed that the Black student had little ability or was a "problem" student, and the students would be directed away from a college education because they would not take the basic courses required for college admittance.

Other disadvantages of a VE program that were listed by community respondents included: students did not acquire a saleable skill even after participating in a VE course; the jobs in which the students were placed were either low paying jobs or jobs that students really did not want; and the organization and implementation of VE programs was seen as inadequate.

In summary, community respondents felt that the two major advantages of vocational education offered Black high school students were in skills preparation and in obtaining well-paying jobs after completing a vocational education program. Although a large number of community persons interviewed indicated that vocational education programs had no disadvantages for Black youth, some respondents felt that the major drawbacks of participation in these programs included the "tracking" of Black students into such programs and the tendency of students in VE programs not to attend college. This seems to reinforce the finding stated earlier in the Mexican American study and in this report that community people generally support the concept of vocational education but have some misgivings about certain aspects of its adequacy and operational procedures.

Job Problems Encountered by Young People

Community respondents were asked to give their perceptions of the type of problems that young people encounter in getting a job and keeping that job

once they are hired. The difficulties encountered by young people in getting a job centered on the student's lack of experience, training, and skills. However, pre-employment skills such as interviewing, filling out applications, appropriate dress and grooming, and generally knowing about the "hows and wheres" of job seeking were seen as definite obstacles that young people faced. Students, according to community respondents, knew little about the labor market and, in some instances, negative work attitudes were seen as detrimental to young people seeking employment. Another problem area mentioned was the student's lack of self-awareness--"What are my interests, aptitudes, and abilities, and how can I coordinate them with a job I like?" and "Where am I going?" are two questions that students should know more about.

By far the most commonly mentioned problem was the perennial "Sorry, you have no experience. I can't hire you." In some instances, age was seen as a barrier in the student's attempt to obtain employment as some companies, for insurance reasons, only hired persons over 18 years of age. Community people also felt that lack of skills and inadequate training at the high school level contributed substantially to the student's job seeking difficulties. They felt that the students were poorly prepared to enter the labor market not only because of the inadequate training but also because, in some instances, the training which the student received did not match that demanded by the labor market. Students were seen as lacking some of the essential factors that contribute to a student's success in obtaining employment--knowing how to interview for a job, knowing how to fill out an employment application accurately, knowing what sources to tap in looking for a job, having an idea of what employers

are expecting, knowing how to dress and groom appropriately, and general "job readiness." Respondents also indicated, although not as strongly, that some young people displayed immaturity, irresponsibility, and negative work attitudes and habits such as not wanting to take orders or doing menial tasks assigned them. A few community people felt that employers expected too much of young people and that the difference in the values between employers and young people worked to the detriment of young people.

When asked what problems they felt young people encountered in keeping a job, community respondents pointed to the young employee's failure to follow rules and regulations and accept orders from his immediate supervisor. Some of this, they believed, was due to a communication gap between young people and employers and between younger employees and older employers. This failure to relate to each other many times results in the young person's being fired or quitting his job. Failure to adjust to the job was regarded as another major problem that young people encountered once they got the job. Negative work attitudes, not being dependable, tardiness, immaturity, inability to accept responsibility, lack of dedication and enthusiasm toward their job, poor motivation and impatience were also cited as problems which impeded the job performance of young people.

Special Job Problems Encountered by Blacks

All of the community respondents felt that the previously mentioned job problems applied to all youth including Blacks. When asked if they believed young Blacks had additional job problems, more than half of the respondents (23 out of 41) felt that Blacks did indeed have additional job problems. Fifteen out of the twenty-three who answered positively felt that discrimination (racial/economic) by employers was an additional problem faced by Blacks. Others felt that Blacks had to work harder to prove themselves on the job, that some Blacks were oversensitive because of their race, and in some instances lacked confidence

in themselves. Lack of adequate counseling in the schools and inadequate academic and vocational training by some schools often resulted in students who were limited in both their academic and vocational skills. A few felt that Blacks were unable to recognize and accept the opportunities available to them. However, the majority of the respondents felt that discrimination on the part of employers was the one major problem that young Blacks faced in job seeking activities.

Improving Educational/Training Opportunities for Blacks

Community informants, much like school personnel, felt that VE programs could be improved by expanding offerings and, at the same time, diversifying program composition.* These and other suggestions were elaborated upon when respondents were asked specific questions about how Black youth could be better prepared for employment and how schools and VE programs could involve the community in its activities.

One of the questions asked community informants was "How can schools or vocational programs better prepare Black youth for employment?" There were a variety of opinions expressed by community people in responding to this question, but most of the suggestions related to very fundamental areas. They felt that schools should teach a marketable skill and attempt to relate the school to the job situation. One way of doing this, they believed, was by involving more Black students in the better cooperative education programs where the students could begin acquiring on-the-job experience. One area of concern was in the recruitment of Black students into VE programs. They felt that schools should have better selection procedures to insure that the student is placed in a program based on interest, ability, and need. The idea of pushing Black students into VE solely because they are Black seemed to be of major concern to community

*See Chapter 5.

respondents. Even if a Black student was placed in a VE program, that student should receive adaquate academic instruction also. Many respondents seemed to feel that once a student was placed in VE the option of going to college was removed.

Community informants were strongly supportive of the idea that Black parents and the Black community in general should be fully aware of the VE offering within the schools. Also, schools should involve both parents and the community in any decisions made about VE. Such awareness and involvement could create a better climate for the acceptance of VE among the minority community in general.

The availability of quality instructors and adequate facilities was seen as important if Black youth are to be better prepared for the world of work. Community informants, much like school personnel, believed that teaching pre-employment skills, good work habits and attitudes, making students aware of their capabilities and aptitudes through better guidance/counseling techniques would be of great value to the student. Gearing the curriculum to meet the special needs of Black students was seen as another way of better preparing the Black student. Some community informants believed that the establishment of placement centers within the schools and initiating or improving follow-up services would be helpful to the Black student seeking employment.

Community Involvement

Community respondents were asked to give suggestions or recommendations as to how schools and specifically vocational education programs could involve the community in their activities. Generally, it was felt that schools should utilize the resources in the community by extending themselves to parent, industry, and business groups and by involving them in educational policy making. They also stated that schools should make an effort to acquaint the community with the services it provides and the kind of vocational programs it offers. Many

strongly recommended that schools should initiate more public relations work in the community with emphasis on information-giving programs. One way of involving the business community would be to have more students employed in work-study programs in the community. This would not only expose employers to more students, but they would also learn from the students and see what kind of students the schools are producing.

In making general comments about improving the educational environment for Blacks and other minority groups in Texas, one community respondent from Waco best summed it up this way;

> In order that we might make any advancements at all in our educational system, that very system needs to change its attitude about its job. The educational system needs to realize that it is there to prepare a student to meet the challenges of a changing world; it is not there solely for the purpose of providing job security for its faculty and staff. The system has lost sight of the student and merely exists to perpetuate its existence. Our educational system is still operating under the "Sabre Tooth Curriculum" theory.
>
> Where the minority student is concerned, the dominant society needs to change its attitude, and I refer to the adult here. Students have the ability to work out their problems so that I do not feel that the student is the problem in the integration process, but rather the parents.
>
> Technical-Vocational educational programs should certainly not be aimed at a particular group (racial/ethnic). It should be stressed to all students. We definitely need more counselors in the school systems in order that the student may be really prepared when he leaves the public school system.

Summary

Community informants, much like school respondents strongly endorsed education programs but had misgivings about its mode of operation and its ability to meet the needs of the community. They were not as knowledgeable about career education but seemed to support the concept philosophically. It was obvious, however, that community people need to be informed about career education activities by educators who are in the process of implementing it in the schools.

Although the community viewed VE as advantageous for the Black student, they still saw several disadvantages. They still sensed that some minority students were being tracked into VE programs and those students that did participate did not acquire a skill that enabled them to obtain a job outside the menial, unskilled area. Thus, some felt that VE was good for the student that was not college bound.

Community informants believed that schools and VE programs could be improved not so much by expanding programs but by upgrading facilities and instructional staff, by teaching marketable skills, and by gearing the curriculum to meet the needs of minority students. They also called for increased school-community relations, believing that such involvement was essential for improving the educational opportunities of all students.

CHAPTER 7

EMPLOYERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This section focuses on those persons who are the actual recipients of the products turned out by secondary school occupational training programs--employers. They are in one of the best positions to evaluate the young employee who has recently completed high school and is now making his way in the world of work. The insights and perceptions which employers have of young people should be extremely valuable to those persons in the school system who are involved in planning and implementing vocational education programs. How do they view vocational education in the high schools? Are such programs adequate in terms of giving young people a skill and in placing them in jobs for which they were trained? What type of job related problems do young people encounter before and after they are hired? What kind of contact exists between schools and employers? How can schools better prepare students? These were a few of the questions to which employers responded and are discussed below.

Employer Profile

A total of 87 employers throughout Texas were formally interviewed by project staff (Interview Form E). Table 1 profiles type of business, position of the person interviewed, location, and approximate size of the company or business. Most employers were selected randomly from lists provided by vocational education personnel or from other lists appropriate to local communities. The responses given here represent input from some employers who had no formal connection with school systems, some employers who had hired recent

high school graduates, and some employers who presently employ high school students through cooperative education programs.

TABLE 1

Profile of Employer Respondents

Total Interviews=87

Type of Business	No.
Wholesale/Retail	25
Manufacturing	16
Service	20
Communications/Utilities	8
Insurance/Banking	10
Government	7
Construction	1
Job of Interviewee	**No.**
Administrative Personnel	45
Business Managers	21
Medium Business Proprietors	14
Clerical/Sales	2
Professionals	5
Size of Company	**No.**
Less than 50 employees	28
50-200 employees	29
200-1,000 employees	12
More than 1,000 employees	18
City	**No.**
Houston	20
Dallas-Fort Worth	15
Waco	10
Austin	7
Marshall	9
Tyler	9
Port Arthur	6
Beaumont	2
San Antonio	4
Galveston	4
Texas City	1

The types of businesses interviewed represented wholesale/retail, manufacturing, service, insurance/banking, communications/utilities, government,

and construction. Persons holding administrative positions represented more than half of the employers interviewed. Twenty-one were classified as business managers, with medium business proprietors, professionals, and clerical/sales accounting for the remainder of the job classifications. The majority of the employers interviewed were in positions which allowed them to be aware of employer-employee relationships on a firsthand basis.

Geographically, more than half of the companies contacted came from larger urban areas such as Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Waco, and Austin. The East Texas cities of Marshall, Tyler, Port Arthur, and Beaumont accounted for nearly one-third of the sample. San Antonio, Galveston, and Texas City were other cities in which employer interviews were conducted. The composition and size of the companies varied--28 firms had less than 50 employees, a similar number had between 50 and 200 employees, 12 had between 200 and 1,000 employees, and 18 had more than 1,000 employees.

Employer Attitudes Toward Vocational Education

Employers expressed a very positive orientation toward the concept of vocational education in the schools. Employers are more apt to appreciate the benefits of occupational training programs, as the persons who come to them with a skill are generally more productive initially than those who possess no skill. Nearly eight out of ten employers interviewed indicated that they very strongly supported vocational education programs in the high school. Employers also indicated their approval of vocational programs in responding to several statements and questions. Table 2 indicates that most employers agreed with the statements that "all students should take some vocational education while in high school," that "more vocational education should be offered in the high schools," and that "vocational education needs to be 'sold'

TABLE 2

Employer Attitudes Toward Vocational Education and Related Activities

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I think that all students should take some vocational education while in high school	27	31.7%	33	38.2%	23	27.0%	2	2.3%
I think more vocational education should be offered in high school	45	51.7%	37	42.5%	4	4.6%	1	1.1%
I think high school students should consider vocational education only if they aren't going to college	2	2.3%	17	19.7%	53	61.6%	14	16.2%
I think that vocational education needs to be "sold to the community"	38	45.2%	42	50.0%	4	4.7%	0	0.0%
I think vocational education programs are a good way of reducing the high dropout rate among Mexican Americans and Blacks	35	41.6%	41	48.8%	6	7.1%	2	2.3%
I believe that high schools should provide some type of placement services	17	19.5%	48	55.1%	19	21.8%	3	3.4%
I believe that the TEC should be more involved with high school students, VE teachers, and counselors	18	22.5%	46	57.5%	14	17.5%	2	2.5%
I think vocational education students generally have better work habits and attitudes than non-vocational education students	20	24.1	43	51.8%	17	20.4%	3	3.6%

to the community." Thus, employers, much like school and community respondents, were very supportive of occupational training as a viable alternative for young people in the high schools.

Adequacy of Vocational Education: The Employer's View

It is assumed that employers, more so than other subgroups interviewed in this project, are in a better position to judge the adequacy of vocational programs because they are the recipients of the finished product. They are the ones who hire students who have participated in high school training programs. Job performance ratings given by employers tend to be very objective: employees have to "put out the work" in order for the employer to make a profit.

Although employers were very supportive of vocational programs in general, they did not feel that such programs were doing the best job possible. When asked if VE programs were meeting the needs of their specific company, only 16.0 percent said that these needs were being met "very well." Table 3 indicates that 38.7 percent of the employers felt that vocational programs were only "partially meeting their needs." Nearly one-fifth said that their company needs were "poorly met." In effect, employers were indicating that they could not be dependent on secondary school occupational programs to satisfy their manpower needs.

In comparing the effectiveness of general high school programs to vocational programs, employers indicated that vocational programs did a superior job of preparing students for entrance into the working world. (See Table 4.) Although about half of the employers said that both general programs and vocational programs did a "somewhat adequate job," nearly one-third of the employers felt that vocational programs did a "good job." On the other hand, only about 14 percent said general programs did a "good job" while nearly 28

TABLE 3

Employer's View of High School Vocational Programs:
"Are VE Programs Meeting the Needs of Your Company?"

Statement	No.	Percentage
Meet our needs very well	13	16.0%
Meet our needs adequately	19	23.4%
Partially meet our needs	31	38.7%
Poorly meet our needs	15	18.5%
Don't meet our needs at all	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0%

percent said that they did a "poor job." The majority of employers interviewed agreed that vocational education students generally had better work

TABLE 4

Percentage of Employer Response Concerning the
Preparation Given Students by High School Programs
and High School Vocational Programs

Preparation	High Schools N=86	Vocational Programs N=85
Do a good job	13.9%	32.9%
Do a somewhat adequate job	51.1%	49.4%
Do a poor job	27.9%	15.2%
Don't prepare them at all	6.9%	2.3%

habits and attitudes than Non-VE students and were generally easier to place. As seen in Table 2, employers also viewed vocational education as a good way to reduce the high dropout rate prevalent among young Mexican Americans and Blacks.

Employers, Young People and Vocational Students

Many of the employers interviewed indicated that a large number of young people--Black, Anglo, and, in the larger urban areas, Mexican Americans--applied for jobs within their company. When asked if their company had any minimal educational or age requirements, most employers said that they were willing to hire young people who had, at the minimum, a high school diploma or a G.E.D. certificate, although they might consider less qualified applicants. In addition, only three employers stated that their minimum age for hiring was 19; the majority said that the minimum age requirement was 18 or less. Those students that were hired at 16 and 17 years of age usually were students who worked part-time and participated in a school related work-study program such as Distributive Education. Although educational and age requirements have long been major barriers to employment for young people, employers interviewed did not generally believe that these factors affected the employability of youth in their companies.

In an open-ended question, employers were asked to give their impressions of high school students as workers. Of the 48 employers who responded to this question, 32 said that students were generally very good workers while 16 believed that young students did not make very good employees. Those that responded in a positive manner were complimentary toward young people, i.e., "Most young people, if properly trained, are excellent workers--tireless, hard-working, and take pride in their jobs"; "Excellent, as a rule, with guidance and training"; "Ours do a great job once training is completed." Some employers viewed them in a disparaging light: "Most have a 'don't care' attitude--even college graduates"; "They want to do very little and expect a lot."

In another question, employers were asked if they thought there was any difference in attitude and work performance between vocational graduates and

non-vocational graduates. The majority of those that responded to this question (38 out of 53) very strongly indicated that VE students were better all around employees than Non-VE students*, especially with those students who were involved in cooperative education programs and other work-study courses. They viewed vocational education students and graduates as being better prepared and trained, more "work oriented," more knowledgeable about jobs, better able to get along with people, more adaptable, and more confident in carrying out job duties. Vocational students tended to be, in the eyes of the employer, more dependable, more interested in the job, and generally very positive toward work.

Skills Acquisition and Job Recruitment

Where did employers think that young people acquired skills necessary to obtain a job? How did employers recruit prospective company employees? In both instances, employers were given a list of places where students usually acquire a skill (high school program, on-the-job training, etc.) and a list which presented various recruiting possibilities. They were then asked to check those items which they believed were most commonly used in skills acquisition and those which they would use for job recruitment.

Table 5 indicates that most employers do their own training or recruit employees from other companies after they have been trained. However, employers still view high school vocational programs as a good source of skills attainment, and they also see community colleges as training reservoirs. Only about one-third of the employers believed that young people acquired training through private business/trade schools or on their own. Very few employers viewed union apprenticeship programs as a source of skills training, probably because

*Table 2 reinforces this view.

of its inaccessability to the student and his lack of knowledge of such programs. In subsequent questions, employers were asked about anticipated job

TABLE 5

Employer's Response to the Ways Young People Acquire Skills

Way Skill Acquired	No. of Responses	% of Total
Do own training (company training)	76	87.3%
High School vocational program	52	59.7%
Other companies train them	40	45.9%
A community vocational/technical college	39	44.8%
Private business or trade school	28	32.1%
On their own	28	32.1%
Union apprenticeship program	9	10.3%
Other	9	10.3%

needs and where they believed persons would receive the training required for those jobs. More employers listed high school training programs (33) than any other, including on-the-job training (30), company training (24), and vocational/technical schools (24).

In terms of company recruitment, Table 6 indicates that the employers' two most commonly used sources of recruitment were: the Texas Employment Commission and employees of their company. The next two most frequently checked items were newspaper want ads and "we recruit our own employees." It is interesting to note that school sources such as vocational counselors and high school placement services were not frequently mentioned by employers as recruiting sources; even private employment agencies were checked more often. Employers tend to rely more on themselves and on non-school sources such as public and private employment agencies rather than on any school related placement activity or personnel.

TABLE 6

Major Sources for Recruitment by Employers

Source	No. of Responses	% of Total
Texas Employment Commission	67	77.0%
Employees of the company	54	62.0%
Newspaper want ads	48	55.1%
We recruit our own employees	48	55.1%
Private employment agency	39	44.8%
Vocational counselor	32	36.7%
High school placement services	21	24.1%
Other	20	22.9%
SER - Jobs for Progress	12	13.7%
Federally funded program	11	12.6%

School-Employer Contacts

Employers have already indicated that the recruitment of young persons into their companies is not presently dependent on school sources--school counselors and high school placement services ranked low as such sources. In several subsequent questions, employers were asked to give their view of school-employer relationships. Over two-thirds of the employers responded that they did not have any formal arrangements with high school vocational programs. (See Table 7.) However, when asked if any person from the local school system had ever contacted them about job placement activities, a similar percentage said that they had been contacted. It appears that although there are few formal arrangements made between the school and the employer, there exist informal modes of communication. Over half of the employers interviewed said that they assumed the initiative in establishing contacts with high school vocational programs. These contacts took the form of telephone calls, visiting schools, some type of cooperative education program, appearing

as speakers on career days, and speaking to individual classes. Most of the employers who contacted the school received excellent or good cooperation

TABLE 7

Employers' Views of
Employer-School Relationships

Question	Yes	No
Do you have any formal arrangements with high school vocational programs?	29	58
Has any person from the local school system ever contacted your agency about job placement activities?	66	20
Have you (employer) initiated any contacts with vocational programs in high schools?	51	36
If yes, what type of activity was it?*		
Telephone call	32	
Visited school	20	
Coop arrangements	18	
Career day speaker	13	
Spoke to individual class	17	
Other	6	

*Respondents could check more than one category.

from school officials. Employers with the best school contacts are those that hire cooperative education students on a part-time basis. Some programs, such as the Distributive Education Clubs of America organization in Houston, have compiled "Speakers' Directories" through which they can call on Houston businessmen to come into their classrooms as resource people. Work-study programs, to a greater degree than other VE programs, also tend to utilize businessmen on advisory boards and in an advising role to teachers and students.

Job Problems Encountered by Young People

Employers were queried about the type and degree of difficulty of job related problems that were common to young people, and specifically to Black

youth. Employers frequently have to meet and assess them in their day-to-day activities.

As in the instruments administered to other groups in this study, employers were asked to rate the intensity of several job related problems that young people encounter. A three-point scale was utilized: 1=no trouble, 2=some trouble, and 3=a lot of trouble. Table 8 summarizes the results.

TABLE 8

Employers' Responses to Degree of Difficulty
Expected in Job Problems Encountered by Young People
(1=No Trouble; 2=Some Trouble; 3=A Lot of Trouble)

Problem	Mean Value
Filling out applications	1.69
Interviewing for a job	1.95
Difficulty in expressing myself well	2.11
Knowing how to dress	2.14
Presenting or "selling" myself to employers	2.32
Having no work experience	2.32
Having no skill(s)	2.41
Getting around (transportation)	1.69
Being discriminated against because of race or ethnic group	1.23
Knowing where to go to get information about jobs	2.03
Not being old enough	1.64
Not knowing what a job is all about	2.33

The major problem areas for young people, as perceived by employers, were as follows: having no skills, not knowing what a job is all about, having no work experience, and presenting or selling themselves to employers. The mean score for each of these responses was over 2.3, indicating that they believed students "had some trouble" in these areas. Other problems in which they felt

that students had some trouble were knowing how to dress, difficulty in expressing themselves well, and knowing where to get information about jobs. Employers perceived such things as filling out applications, interviewing for a job, transportation, and not being old enough as problems which were not severe among young people. The one item which received the lowest rating by employers was "being discriminated against because of race or ethnic origin." Employers seemed to feel, more so than school and community informants, that discrimination was not too much of a factor in student job seeking activities.

In all but two areas employers felt that young people experienced a greater degree of difficulty in job seeking activities than did students. The mean scores in student responses never exceeded 2.00, whereas seven similar items to which the employers responded ranged from 2.11 to 2.41. The two items in which the mean scores were lower for employers than for students were: being discriminated against because of race or ethnic origin and not being old enough. Students, more so than employers, believed that discrimination and age would present them with some difficulty in their job seeking activities. The reason that students tend to minimize most problems is, perhaps, because of their limited work experience exposure. Employers, however, come in daily contact with young people who constantly experience difficulty in these areas.

Employers, in a series of open-ended questions, were asked to give their own versions of the type of problems young people encountered both in getting a job and in keeping a job once they were hired. An additional question inquired into problems that might confront Blacks more so than other groups. Responses to these questions appeared to verify some of the observations on job problems discussed above, but they also brought out other problem areas.

In responding to the question "What problems do youth encounter in looking for a job?" the two most frequently mentioned problems were lack of experience

and lack of a marketable skill. Appearance and grooming was also frequently mentioned by employers as a definite problem area. It will be recalled that students did not see dress and appearance as a major problem. Some employers and personnel managers feel that young people fail to conform to appropriate dress codes, especially in jobs that require it. Employers also mentioned lack of maturity, lack of confidence, poor work habits, negative work attitudes, unwillingness to work certain hours, and unrealistic job goals and expectations as characteristic of some of the young people who are seeking employment.

When asked what problems youth encountered in keeping a job, employers reiterated much of the above. However, absenteeism, tardiness, failure to get along with supervisors and co-workers, and not complying with company rules and regulations, were seen as additional obstacles in keeping a job. Irresponsibility, immaturity, high expectations, no interest in the job, conflicts in working hours/social life schedule, and poor work habits and attitudes were seen as detrimental characteristics in some young people.

Although more employers felt that Blacks did not have additional job problems (46 out of 79 said they did not), the ones that responded affirmatively said that discrimination was the one major problem that Blacks faced in job seeking activities. These employers also felt that although Black youth had similar problems as did other youth in job seeking, their problems were much more intensified. Some employers stated that Blacks were poorly prepared in the educational systems for functioning in the "white" world of work. They found Blacks lacking in basic and communication skills and, in some instances, they had difficulty in understanding and following orders. Bringing negative attitudes to work was also mentioned as a problem prevalent among some Black youth, i.e., carrying a "chip" on their shoulder, and being suspicious of white

employers. Some respondents felt that cultural and economic factors hindered the young Black in obtaining employment. According to a few employers, negative home environments and low economic status were added obstacles which face many Blacks and which have to be overcome. These problems were seen as additional burdens for Black youth. The majority of employers, however, believed that youth in general had common problems and concerns.

Employers were asked if there should be a special course in high school to expose students to careers, jobs, and generally what is expected of them in the world of work. Every single employer interviewed said that such a course was a must not only for vocational education students but for all students while they are still in high school. All groups interviewed by this project--including students--indicated that this type of course should be introduced at the high school level. Nine out of ten students, both VE and Non-VE, said they would participate in such a course if it were offered. Pre-employment skills and career and job information topics were two areas which employers definitely saw as priorities.

What Should Schools Do to Better Prepare Youth for Employment?

Employers, in a series of open-ended questions, were asked to give their opinions on what schools can or should do to improve the employability of young people. They were asked: "In general, how can schools and/or vocational programs better prepare youth for the world of work?" and "Are there any specific programs or courses that you would like to see initiated or expanded in the schools?"

Employers believed that there were three general areas in which schools needed improvement in order to provide young people with adequate preparation for the world of work: initiation of a job orientation or human relations

course in the high schools, improving ability to teach basic and fundamental skills with proficiency, and involving the business and industrial community in school affairs.

The type of job orientation courses that employers discussed dealt with a variety of topics, mostly attitudinal. Employers saw a great need for exposing students to the many facets of the working world other than just skills training. They felt that schools should teach students such things as respect for their employers and their property, pride in their work and in their jobs, and expectations regarding such things as attendance, punctuality, and dedication to job. Things such as honesty, fairness, integrity, responsibility, and other personal attributes should be emphasized in these programs. Students should be introduced to the idea that they must learn how to deal with people in an effective manner. Improving communication skills and developing positive work habits should be a major objective of any program. Students must learn not only to take and follow orders but also to accept criticism when warranted. All employers agreed that this type of program or course must have high priority if schools are to turn out better products. However, students must also learn a basic occupational skill that they can use once they graduate from high school. Referring more to VE students than to Non-VE students, employers believed that a student who participated in an occupational program must be taught at least the rudiments of a particular skill so that the student can build on it once he gets on the job.

Another way through which schools could improve the "quality" of their products would be to maximize the input of business and industrial personnel in the schools. Most employers felt that schools should initiate this involvement by reaching out to this reservoir of expertise. Schools should solicit assistance and advice informally. Employers should be formally involved in

advisory boards and committees and in planning and organizational functions. Those who would benefit most from this interaction, employers feel, would be students.

Regarding programs or courses employers would like to see initiated or expanded in schools, they mentioned "more job orientation courses," "more vocational courses," and "better guidance and counseling services." Employers also listed a variety of specific subjects they believed should be implemented in the schools. Auto mechanic trades and business courses which emphasize typing and clerical skills were some of the most frequently mentioned courses. Subjects dealing with occupations such as welding, buildings and trades, machinist, sheetmetal trades, plumbing, electricity, air conditioning and refrigeration, and heavy equipment operators were seen as skills courses which should be initiated in the high schools. These subjects mentioned by the employers coincide with the kind of jobs that they have the most difficulty in filling now. Also, when asked what kind of job openings they anticipated in the next one to five years, employers most frequently mentioned those jobs that fall in the "6000" and "3000" classifications as listed by the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Other specific courses mentioned by employers included allied health courses, drafting, keypunching, insurance and real estate courses, advertising, cosmetology, salesmanship, marketing, and blueprint reading. Work-study programs were seen as very beneficial programs by employers because here the student was forced to learn "on the job" and not in a classroom.

In listing general topic areas, employers believed that vocational programs in all the above areas should be expanded and that guidance and counseling activities in the schools needed to be improved. They also felt that "human relations" courses which would assist students in dealing more effectively

with people needed to be initiated in the schools for all students. A few employers believed that more "lab-type" courses where students could pursue individual interests should be offered in the schools. In general, courses which would help develop a well-rounded person--academically, vocationally, and socially--were strongly supported by most employers.

When asked specifically what the schools could do better to prepare Black youth for the world of work, many employers felt that whatever was done to improve schools in general would tend to improve the situation of Black students. Many employers, however, stressed the need for "quality education" for Blacks. "Quality education," in the employer's opinion, meant giving Black students a solid foundation in basic skills such as mathematics, English comprehension, and communication skills. They felt that if the schools produced a student with a strong background in these areas students could easily make the school-to-work transition. In addition to a good basic education employers believed that schools should make a special effort to provide Black students with working skills through vocational programs at the high school level. "Quality education," employers noted, can only be achieved if adequate facilities and instruction are provided in schools which are predominately Black. Employers were particularly emphatic about the development and implementation of human relations and self-awareness courses in predominately Black schools. They felt that Black students should deal not only with their cultural awareness, but also with the culture of the mainstream. Employers noted that Black youth must be aware of the fact that they must compete in an integrated society and that, in many instances, the rules of the game are determined by a "white-oriented" society. One of the most important things that a Black student should learn is that he is an individual--no more or no less than the next person. Schools and others should refrain from "labeling" students and expect

certain things from them just because of their ethnicity. Students should not be made to feel that they are really different. Minority students should not be given the impression that the world "owes them a living." In other words, students should deal with the realities that they will encounter after they leave school, and schools should provide the avenues through which students can deal with such realities. Self-awareness and human relations courses are two of the ways in which this might be accomplished.

Employers also believed that, while in school, Black students should be motivated not only to finish their high school educations but to continue the educational process after graduation. One of the things that employers felt would be of tremendous benefit to all students, but especially to Black and other minority students, would be a career and job orientation course either offered separately or interwoven into the curriculum. As noted previously they also believed that such a course is necessary for all students.

Summary

Although the majority of the employers view the concept of vocational education positively, they are somewhat dubious of the adequacy of such programs. On the one hand, employers say that they support occupational training at the high school level, but, on the other hand, they say such programs only partially meet their company needs. In a wide perspective, however, employers see vocational programs as better than general programs in terms of preparing a student for employment and in keeping students in school. They also think that VE students make better employees than Non-VE students, especially because of better work attitudes and occupational skills. Employers still feel, however, that the best source of skills acquisition for young people lies in the training provided by them. They also see a need for more employer-school

contact and involvement, and they are especially interested in seeing more job orientation and human relations activities initiated or expanded in the high schools in order to alleviate the difficult school-to-work transition faced by young people, particularly Black youth. Expansion of present vocational programs and implementation of new programs as dictated by the labor market was seen as one way through which school districts could better serve their students.

PART IV

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this report was to describe and document the feelings, attitudes, aspirations, and needs of Black high school students. Similar information was gathered from a small sample of Black graduates, Black dropouts, and Black parents. In addition, the views of school personnel, community informants, and employers toward Black youth and occupational education in Texas high schools were elicited. The input provided by these individuals should be given strong consideration by educators and policy makers in the State.

The focus of the study was on what the students themselves said and felt. Before any changes or improvements can occur in the educational environment, there must be a change in the schools and in school personnel. Schools must seek community support, for without that support, schools cannot adequately meet the needs of the community. Employers should be an important link between school and the world of work. Based on what was found in this study, what can be done to change or improve the educational and training opportunities of Black youth in Texas? This chapter concerns itself with that question.

Students

If the students in both the VE and Non-VE samples are representative of Black high school students--how they view themselves and their futures, then a number of major implications for both policy and program emerge. In addition, questions are raised that may only be answered through further study and analysis.

More than three-fourths of all students in the sample came from low income working-class homes in which, in some instances, the principal wage earner was the mother. Low income status does not necessarily imply that the principal

wage earners lacked formal education. It does imply, however, that Black wage earners were employed at jobs that did not maximize their educational potentials. Their low socioeconomic status might reflect on the inadequacies of their formal education, and it may also be indicative of the fact that Blacks have been shunted into low status jobs in those parts of Texas where this survey was conducted.

Somewhat disturbing is the social class composition of Black VE students. This survey indicated that nearly eight out of ten Black students in vocational programs came from lower income, working-class families. Vocational education in Texas is definitely not the domain of the middle or upper income Black student. It appears that such programs are not as widely accepted by middle class Black parents. Until they are, vocational programs will continue to be a "great thing" for someone else's child.

Considering the socioeconomic status of this sample, it is not surprising to find that Black students' first post-high school preference was to find a steady job. The VE students' second choice was post-high school occupational training followed by college or university education. Non-VE students preferred college as their second choice and post-secondary training as the third alternative. Although economic necessity makes Black students--both VE and Non-VE--realistic about their plans after high school, their enthusiasm for further education remains high.

The idea that Black students are apathetic about their educations and their futures must be re-examined. Students in this sample were definitely not apathetic. They indicate a marked desire for success through the educational process, currently in high school, and subsequently in university work and in post-secondary occupational training. Their academic preparation may be lacking in many regards--less than adequate instruction, counseling, school facilities,

facilities for study at home--but their ambitions are high. Indeed, it might be said that their ambitions are unrealistically high, not because they are Black, but because the occupational structure that must absorb them is limited in its present capacity to find places for as many who might opt for professional and advanced technical careers. A key question which must be faced focuses upon keeping alive and dynamic the clearly evident ambitions of these high school youth, but gearing them into meaningful productive channels.

Many young Black females showed a decided interest in health service careers yet, at the same time, indicated that they did not know what might be involved in entering such careers. This disparity may be symptomatic regarding other careers too: the learned professions and university-education-based technical jobs, strong preferences for students of both sexes. Are they aware of the fact that to be a lawyer requires seven years of university work, the last three of which are in sudden-death competition with a limited number of competitors? Or that to be a physicist may require ten years of grueling study? Or that to be a physician also requires a decade of university and clinical work with only a handful of survivors?

It is clear that intensive career education is woefully needed by Black students. They must know career parameters or, otherwise, most may be slated for disappointment which, in turn, may foster bitterness. Career education should be bolstered by more and better career guidance, especially in the high schools, and if current guidance personnel are two few or too limited in their own horizons and/or knowledge, alternatives to in-school guidance should be sought (i.e., group guidance sessions, participation in guidance programs by employers and labor union representatives, etc.).

There is a marked discrepancy between what these young people see as problems in finding a job and what employers see as problems for them in finding a job. As an example, students rated all problem areas in job seeking as giving them little or no difficulty. That which concerned them least was "knowing how to dress." Employers, on the other hand, saw such problems as giving students difficulty, especially in grooming and dress.

As with Mexican American students, the primary preference of Blacks upon graduation (regardless of where and how high ambitions may roam) is the very pragmatic alternative of "getting a steady job." Although they seem to feel that they will not be beset by problems in job hunting, they overwhelmingly support the idea of a job problems course in high school, a course that they would want to take, if offered. Using both in-school and community resources such a course could be relatively easily organized. For the information--and for the ultimate protection--of students, it would seem that this should be of very high priority in all school systems serving minority students. Females especially, who indicate a reluctance to support the traditional wife/mother role, should be given the opportunity to prepare themselves better for the world of work through such a course and through prompting, counseling, and educating in all areas of possible employment (including those that have been almost exclusively male sanctuaries).

Black Graduates and Dropouts

As in the case of the Black in-school students, Black graduates and dropouts reported a strong interest in obtaining more education and training. Dropouts particularly sensed their inadequate educational and skills preparation and said that, if the schools have something to offer them, such as a VE course in which they might be interested, they would consider returning to school. This presents

adult education programs and community colleges with a special challenge--that of motivating young Blacks to return to school by providing them with relevant and adequate programs. Schools must make more of an effort to retain students in school and avoid the "push out" syndrome. Potential dropouts must be identified and provided with additional assistance--more counseling, parent-teacher sessions, etc. Although the dropouts in this study said they left school between their junior and senior years, in a statewide basis they are atypical. The critical grades for leaving school are the middle grades (7-10). This is where schools should structure curriculum materials to make students aware of the relationship between school and work and the pitfalls of leaving school. Nowhere would career education be more appropriate than at this stage of development.

It is not surprising that Black dropouts experienced more intense job related problems than did graduates. Both groups reported "having no work experience" as a major problem in getting a job, but dropouts encountered more difficulty in "expressing themselves well" and in "selling themselves to employers." Graduates and dropouts, as did in-school students, favored a job orientation course in high school, feeling that such a course would have been helpful to them after leaving school. Occupational and career group guidance activities in the high schools focusing on career information, self-awareness, and job orientation were strongly indicated by the responses of graduates and dropouts.

A Note on Black Parents

As with Mexican American parents studied earlier, Black parents expressed a high degree of interest in their children's school activities but their active participation in them was rather low. Generally, parents were very supportive of the total school experience, including VE programs. They wanted their children to either get a job or go to college after graduation from school. Black parents did not seem to know much about post-high school training opportunities

despite the recent proliferation of such training. It is apparent that parents need to be better acquainted with these types of programs. Community colleges and other post-secondary training entities must make more of an effort to inform parents of training opportunities.

Black parents seemed receptive to any school initiated move to bring them closer to the schools. Although hindered by economic and time constraints, Black parents voiced a strong desire to be more active in school affairs. Improving the relationship between minority parents and the schools should continue to be a major consideration of both educators and the community in general. Parental involvement in school affairs has typically had positive effects on the student's educational achievement.

Community, School, and Employer Input

Vocational education enjoys wide general support as a concept among school personnel, community informants, and employers. The concept is accepted and this may provide a strong springboard for future vocational education activities. However, there is still the feeling that VE is not meeting the needs of the community, especially minority communities in Texas. School personnel expressed the need for program expansion and diversification while members of the community, including employers, saw more of a need for upgrading facilities and instructional staff. School and community respondents seemed more concerned about the selection and recruitment of minority students into VE programs. Although Black students did not indicate that they were "pushed" into VE programs, the feeling still persists that VE is used as a dumping ground for the slow student, the troublemaker, and in some instances, the minority student. Another study conducted by Pennsylvania State University found that, as in this study, Black students gave no indication that they were "dumped" into VE programs. However,

the question remains whether the self-perceived reasons given by the students were brought about by other subtle school factors and pressures.*

Some community and school informants felt that VE had certain disadvantages for Black high school students. Many Black informants indicated that VE participation in high school would tend to lead students away from the academic curriculum required for college work, thus preventing Black students from pursuing this alternative. They also expressed the opinion that many Black students, even if they received adequate training in high school, still found themselves in low paying, unskilled jobs after graduation. Despite these feelings, however, community and school informants felt that participation in vocational programs offered the Black student the opportunity to learn a skill, obtain a better paying job, and obtain greater job satisfaction. VE participants were consistantly rated higher in work attitudes and habits than Non-VE students by school personnel and employers. But the fact remains that vocational education is far from being fully accepted by the total Black community in Texas. The implications for expanded and continued contact between school VE programs and the Black community are obvious. Greater efforts must be made to "sell" vocational education to them.

Strong support for career education was voiced by school, community, and employer informants. Most school personnel interviewed appeared knowledgeable about its objectives and indicated a need for an expansion of career education activities in the schools. However, there remained many school personnel who did not know much about career education or had misconceptions about it. Particularly distressing was the fact that the relationship between career and vocational education did not seem to be fully understood by some educators.

*See Jacob J. Kaufman, et al, The Role of the Secondary School in the Preparation of Youth for Employment, Pennsylvania State University, Institute for Human Resources, 1967.

Vocational educators, more so than others in the school setting, seem more receptive to and knowledgeable about career education. Community informants and employers, on the other hand, appeared to have a nebulous conception of career education.

It is clear that career education, much like vocational education, needs to be fully explained to the community and even to some persons within the school setting. It needs to be emphasized that vocational education is associated with career education but that career education encompasses the entire curriculum. The danger in equating the two concepts is that many persons will perceive career education as a program rather than a concept and, in some way, attribute negative connotations to career education much like those vocational education has acquired in the past. Myths and misconceptions regarding career education should not be allowed to flourish.

If properly introduced and implemented, career education could serve as the catalyst for upgrading the image and importance of vocational education. Career education also has the potential of increasing opportunities for Blacks and Mexican Americans in the State. Public support for this concept is essential, especially in the minority communities. Minority groups are already aware of the schools' past failures and view with suspicion and mistrust any "new programs" that educators claim will benefit minority students. Thus, those charged with the responsibility of implementing this approach must be especially careful to avoid confusion in presenting it. If career education were to acquire a negative image, the implications would be disastrous for society and catastrophic for minority groups.

There were many suggestions and recommendations made by school and community respondents for improving the educational experiences of young people. Although many of these suggestions were made in regard to Black youth and vocational education, they are nonetheless applicable to all students.

School personnel listed several recommendations for improving the educational environment in their schools, particularly as it affected vocational education. Primarily, they felt there should be more attempts by schools and by vocational personnel to "sell" VE programs within the school setting and in the community; and, secondly, they believed school districts should expand both vocational program offerings and plant facilities for such programs. New facilities, it was felt, would serve to attract more students into VE programs and help improve the image of VE. Other recommendations included:

1. increasing career education activities and personnel;
2. increasing the vocational instructional staff and providing more professional development activities;
3. recruiting more students into VE programs with emphasis on those who have the interest and ability to participate in VE programs;
4. improving the method of selecting students for VE programs;
5. involving more people from industry and the community in vocational programs and vocational planning activities;
6. providing more placement and follow-up services;
7. increasing in-service training activities for all school personnel, especially in relation to VE; and
8. keeping teacher training institutions abreast of the changes occurring in society and in the field of education. Teacher and counselor training institutions, it was intimated, sometimes appeared to lag behind innovations made by the schools and other educational organizations.

Community respondents echoed the recommendations made by school personnel. Their main emphasis was on increased and more productive school-community relations. They felt that school districts should make more of an effort to inform the community about their programs and activities. This, they believed, would increase community acceptance of such programs. Community people strongly indicated that the curriculum in the schools should be adapted to meet special needs of students, especially those of minority students.

Employers recommended that schools should initiate or expand courses which expose students to jobs, careers, job problems and expectations, teach pre-employment skills, and engage students in more self-awareness activities. To employers, any type of course which dealt with work attitudes and habits would tend to increase the student's employability. Employers suggested that improving the ability of schools to teach basic and fundamental skills could only be accomplished by having adequate facilities and qualified personnel. It seems that employers were not so much interested in the teaching of a wide variety of skills, but in producing students who had a solid background in essential subjects. One of the major recommendations made by employers was that of intensifying the involvement of business and industry in school activities. Two other areas which the employers mentioned included improving guidance and counseling services in the schools and expanding the work-study programs to encompass more students. As for Black students, employers felt that whatever was done to improve the educational environment would tend to improve the situation for Black students. Many employers stressed the need for quality education for Blacks--that is, providing a good foundation in basic subjects and in verbal and social skills. A well-prepared student, regardless of ethnicity, would have little difficulty in making the school-to-work transition.

Respondents felt that young job seekers were faced with many problems arising out of their limited experience and exposure to the world of work--lack of experience and lack of a saleable skill were the most frequently mentioned. Limited pre-employment skills, especially among Non-VE students, seemed to be another problem. Lack of dependability, negative work attitudes and habits, and inability to get along with other people characterize young job seekers. Although Blacks have the same job related problems as other students, most respondents saw additional trouble areas such as discrimination in employment and

training opportunities, lack of social and verbal skills, inappropriate dress and grooming practices and negative work attitudes. Employers, more so than school and community informants, appeared to have greater awareness of the intensity of job related problems faced by young people.

It was strongly suggested by all of the persons interviewed that discussions of job and career related topics should be expanded in schools presently providing these experiences or that such discussions be initiated in places where there are none at this time. Special emphasis should be placed on career/job information, self-awareness activities, pre-employment skills, and developing social and verbal skills. Improving work habits and attitudes toward work were also given high priority by school respondents.

A Note on Counseling and Guidance

The need for increased, improved, and different guidance activities has long been voiced.* Those sampled in this study also indicated a similar concern. Counseling and guidance have always held high priority in the educational system but, seemingly, very little change has taken place. Consequently, counselors have been the subject of much criticism. It is a well known fact that counselors are often assigned duties in the school which prevent them from carrying out counseling functions. High student-counselor ratios make it impossible for counselors to reach every student in the school. But, on the other hand, it appears that most counselors have not provided realistic occupational counseling to their students and have failed to utilize alternative forms of guidance which could have positive impact on more students. Counselor training institutions

*Counseling and Guidance: A Need for Change, Report 6 by the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, June 1, 1972. Also see Toward Quality Education for Mexican Americans, Final Report: Mexican American Education Study, A Report of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, February, 1974.

must share part of the blame for this dilemma; they, for too long, ignored training counselors in how to guide the young people who were not college bound.

This study has documented two specific areas in which counseling and guidance should be strengthened: in student educational planning activities at the intermediate level (junior high) and in occupational career/guidance activities at the high school level. It also found that guidance activities are often just as effectively conducted by specially trained teachers and other school personnel. Counselors should more effectively utilize community resources to supplement their counseling activities. Peer counseling, use of counselor aides, and group processes are three examples of how problems in these areas could be overcome.

One area of need within the counseling realm is the area of student educational planning. Oftentimes this planning involves the counselor and the student getting together to decide on the program and courses to be taken by the student when he enters high school. There is no attempt to provide the student with any kind of systematic process through which the student, working with his counselor, teacher, and parents, if possible, can plan his immediate educational objectives and his longer range career or job objectives. The time to do this kind of planning is in the intermediate grades (7-9), before the student embarks on a major study program at the high school level. This type of guidance could do much to improve the selection and recruitment of students into VE programs. Career education is attempting to partially fill this void by exposing students to careers and jobs. However, this is not being done on a widespread basis at the present time.

The other priority is in occupational guidance and counseling. This need was strongly expressed by school and community informants. This type of guidance is extremely valuable to the student who is expected to enter the labor market immediately after graduation, but it is also beneficial to all students

regardless of their plans. Pre-employment skills, job/career information, self-awareness activities relating school work habits and attitudes to actual work situations should be an integral part of such counseling.

There are various approaches through which these needs could be met. Any guidance activities which have sound objectives, a structured curriculum, and an effective process by which the content can be transmitted to the student should be given strong consideration. However, given the needs and problems of minority groups as expressed by respondents, the traditional one-to-one counseling has been very ineffective and is impractical. It appears that group activities would have more utility among Black and Mexican American students as the counselor-student ratio is often disproportionate. The type of problems encountered by Blacks and Mexican Americans lend themselves well to group guidance techniques. One special program has been found to be highly effective in providing training, materials, and follow-up consultation to educators throughout Texas. The Group Guidance Program, based in Houston but providing training across the state, focuses on preparing youth to make a positive transition from high school to suitable employment or post-high school training. Appendix B contains a description of that program.

If career education were to be properly implemented in the school systems throughout the State, many of the problems currently found in the counseling and guidance field would be diminished. However, it is clear that specific curriculum materials must be developed, in-service and professional development programs increased, and innovative approaches continued before the guidance needs of minority groups in Texas can be met.

The suggestions and recommendations stemming out of this report are based on field observations and empirically based findings. It is hoped that the

results of this study will prompt educational practitioners and researchers to continue to search for ways that will maximize the educational and training opportunities for Black youth in Texas.

APPENDICES

A. School Districts and High Schools Surveyed

B. A Description of the Group Guidance Program Developmental Stages

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND HIGH SCHOOLS SURVEYED

BEAUMONT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	September 10-14
Charlton-Pollard High School	
Beaumont Technical Center	
PORT ARTHUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	September 17-21
Lincoln High School	
Stilwell Technical Center	
MARSHALL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	October 1-5
Marshall High School	
TYLER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	October 29-November 2
John Tyler High School	
Robert E. Lee High School	
WACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	October 29-November 2
Jefferson Moore High School	
Richfield High School	
FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	October 22-26
Trimble Technical Center	
DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	October 22-26
Pinkston High School	
South Oak Cliff High School	
Bryan Adams High School	
Skyline High School	
GALVESTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	November 12-16
Ball High School	
SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	November 26-30
Sam Houston High School	
Fox Technical Center	
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	December 3-7
Madison High School	
Houston Technical Institute	
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT	December 10-14
Reagan High School	
Stephen F. Austin High School	
Lanier High School	
Johnston High School	

APPENDIX B

A DESCRIPTION OF THE
GROUP GUIDANCE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

PHASE I - 1968-1971

The Vocational Guidance Service - Group Guidance Program was originally funded in 1968 by the U.S. Department of Labor as an Experimental and Demonstration project in Houston, Texas, designed to prepare youth to make a positive transition from high school to suitable employment or post-high school training. In three years of operation, the project staff involved over 5,560 students in sixteen (16) area high schools in the development, field testing, and refinement of curricular materials. Generally, the objectives of the program were:

A. to relate total school and extra-curricular activities to the world of work;

B. to assist students in making adequate and realistic self appraisals with regard to post-high school employment and training plans;

C. to acquaint students with the extent of employment possibilities existing in both the local and national labor markets, including information related to job structuring and classification systems;

D. to provide students with the job-seeking techniques and skills necessary for maximum success in entering the labor market upon graduation or after completion of post-high school education/training;

E. to increase students' awareness of and provide competency in social and work-related interpersonal relationships and attitudes; and

F. to afford students the opportunity for developing decision-making skills.

Included in the products of the three-year experimental model are: 1) a comprehensive operations manual designed to serve as a guide for project replication; 2) student curriculum guides and materials, including facilitator instructions; and 3) a manual designed as a guide to train educational personnel in the use of the student curriculum materials utilizing task-oriented group processes. It was anticipated, however, that even while the above documents were being prepared, if the experimental project was to become an integral part of the education system in Houston, Texas, and elsewhere, that stronger implementation measures than developing the above mentioned products would be necessary. This concept became increasingly evident as the project staff gave presentations to school districts which indicated interest in the program.

PHASE II - 1971 - 1972

While most of the participants at these presentations and workshops generally voiced favorable reactions regarding the program, many posed such issues as students scheduling difficulties, conflicting priorities, space problems, lack of basic group process practice, and others which would act as barriers to initiating a group guidance program in their schools. As a result of these kinds of questions and issues, work was started on the initial implementation program which operated in Consortium C.

The mandate of the implementation proposal which was funded jointly by the U. S. Department of Labor and by the Division of Occupational Research and Development of Texas Education Agency was to train 160 educational personnel within Consortium C between December 1, 1971, and June 30, 1972, to implement and maintain an effective group vocational guidance program. These personnel included appropriate university staff members and secondary school administrators, guidance personnel and teachers. The objectives of this training program were to equip these personnel with the competencies to: 1) implement an expanded group guidance program in their respective school systems; and 2) provide similar training to additional educational personnel within the Consortium. By involving instructors from the teacher-training institutions within Consortium C and the guidance coordinators from each of the three Education Service Centers, the continued training would be provided both at the University level (pre-service) and in the field (in-service).

The specific method for conducting the training required the Group Guidance Program staff to visit each participating school site during each scheduled group session to demonstrate, observe, and critique the training group sessions.

PHASE III - 1972 - 1973

As a result of increased requests for similar training activities from additional school districts within Consortium C as well as from Education Service Centers and school districts in numerous other parts of Texas, a definite need was recognized for the development of a more complete training process which could be made readily available in a practical and economically feasible manner. Therefore, as a continued cooperative effort between Texas Education Agency and the U. S. Department of Labor, concurrent projects were funded to: 1) develop and field test a Multi-Media Training Package which would constitute a comprehensive model for implementing the concepts, products, and methodologies developed by the original Group Guidance Program staff; and 2) to train 65 additional educators in Consortium C as well as to provide workshop training sessions in each of the twenty Education Service Centers in the State of Texas to accomplish the same goals as outlined in the original Consortium C implementation proposal.

PHASE IV - 1973 - 1974

At the conclusion of the second year of implementation activities in the State of Texas, a total of 566 educators have participated in the training activities. Several service centers have held or have scheduled repeat workshops to expand the training activities and program implementation. However, with continued emphasis and priorities given to comprehensive career education and other related fields--and numerous requests for training services and/or orientation sessions, there remained a recognizable need for a continued effort in training more educators. Generally, these requests were for: 1) initial training sessions in those service centers which could not or did not request training earlier; and 2) follow-up services which include local assistance, additional group process techniques, case development, and Education Service Center-based training assistance for those participating in the '72-'73 activities. Training and follow up activities have continued through the 1973-74 school year.